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The adult illustrated fantasy magazine

CHAIN MAIL

Dear Editors:

I am an avid fan and subscriber to the "H. Metal," and yet I've been close to writing this criticism of some of the story line since my first issue. What has motivated me *this* morning is your response to a certain D. D'Falahee's letter regarding the sexist material in your magazine. Please reconsider her point, because I think you might find some non-threatening truth to it. If you are unfamiliar with sexism, then perhaps just weigh the demeaning roles and who is in them, and whether or not there is any pattern to story lines. The woman portrayed as the weakling and/or sex toy *period* does get a little tiring. . . .

Lynn Reynolds
City, California

Girls, girls, girls — what are we going to do with you? I mean, enough is enough. I'm as much for equal rights as the next woman, but it seems to me, when you start reading feminist politics into comics, well, it really becomes a drag.

Lord knows there are an awful lot of breasts bouncing around the pages of HM, *so in contrast we offer "Den" (see p. 9). Often the male artists tend to get a bit sexist, but we run a variety of strips, and frequently the woman does come out "the good guy/gal/person . . . ."*

I can offer no ready explanation of why so often "the woman is portrayed as the weakling," and though I'm not condoning it, it's been going on for a hell of a lot longer than Heavy Metal *can take the blame for.*

So let's calm down — after all, it's a comic book. — Julie Simmons, Associate Editor

Dear Editors:

Having purchased the last three issues of your magazine, I am interested but still not very impressed. Graphics in your publication tend to be very good to excellent. But I fail to see why it is continually necessary to fortify lagging or diarrhetic literary content with the repeated blowing off of heads (more or less graphically illustrated), or blimp-breasted women flaunting their wares or involving themselves in expressions of pubic male fantasy. Surely the writers must be capable of something a little more interesting, cer-

Continued on page 68

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...CONSEQUENTLY...

Not so long, long ago, & right here in this galaxy, there wasn't much. No Mighty Marvel, no Underground Comics, no fun: fun was dead or sleeping under a blanket of Hayes Office movie code, & McCarthy thinking code, & Dr. Wertham comics code . . . & then there was Barbarella! Right there in the pages of the terribly controversial, terribly *avant-garde Evergreen Review*, a sex-space-fantasy COMIC! Fun was alive and well and living in France! In 1962!

And then there was Zap, & Spidey, & Pop Art, & a movie about Superman, & *Heavy Metal* . . .

But it all began with Barbarella, the comic, & was sustained by *Barbarella*, the movie, & goes on forever (we hope) with the all-new adventures of Barbarella which we begin here, written and drawn by her original creator, Jean-Claude Forest, to whom all praise.

Front & back cover & inside double spread this time by Alex Nino, whom we are assured is "leading figure on the new Philippines illustration scene." Previously famed for you shld pardon the expression psychedelic posters of sword & sorcery class, Nino is in process of illustrating Sturgeon's classic *More Than Human* stories which we, in time, will publish here.

HM dream-queen Alice Playten aka Alice White sez: "The moral of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* is, if everybody on earth were to hum 'Duelling Banjos' at the same time, the Pillsbury doughboy would come down from the sky aboard the Houston Astrodome." Nice talk.

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MARVELS OF THE UNIVERSE

A TYPICAL "FAMILY" OF SWIMMERS
THIS ANTIQUE PICTURE SHOWS AN ORDINARY FAMILY OF AIR-SWIMMERS... NOTICE ON THE BOTTOM, THE TOP, AND FROM LEFT TO RIGHT THE FLIER, THE RIDER, THE SPEEDER, THE TWO FRIFONS, THE MAJEN AND THE TOOPONDOO, SO CONTROVERSIAL IN OUR DAY...
IN THE BACKGROUND, OTHER FAMILIES GRACEFULLY EXERCISE AGAINST THE BROKEN SKYLINE OF THE VERLUSIAN MOUNTAINS.

THE TIME HAS COME...
SURELY THEY WOULDN'T BOMB THIS BEAUTIFUL STEAM ENGINE TRAIN JUST TO GET US!...UNLESS, OF COURSE, THEY'RE CAPABLE OF ANYTHING...
THE AIRTIGHT GARAGE OF JERRY CORNELIUS
BY MOEBIUS
OUR STORY TO DATE: THE ATTRACTIVE STEAM ENGINE TRAIN WHICH IS CARRYING SAM, THE MAJOR'S SPY, HAS JUST COME UNDER ATTACK FROM A MYSTERIOUS AIRPLANE.
TICKETS, PLEASE!
YEAH...
WELL!... I SEEM TO HAVE LOST MY TICKET!...

MEANWHILE, THE ENGINEER BARNABUS HAS LOST HIS WAY IN THE MAZE OF THE SINGING CAVES.
?
SKROWIIIZZ
SOMEONE'S COMING... QUICK!... GOT TO HIDE!...
SO!!!
TO BE CONTINUED...

Dean

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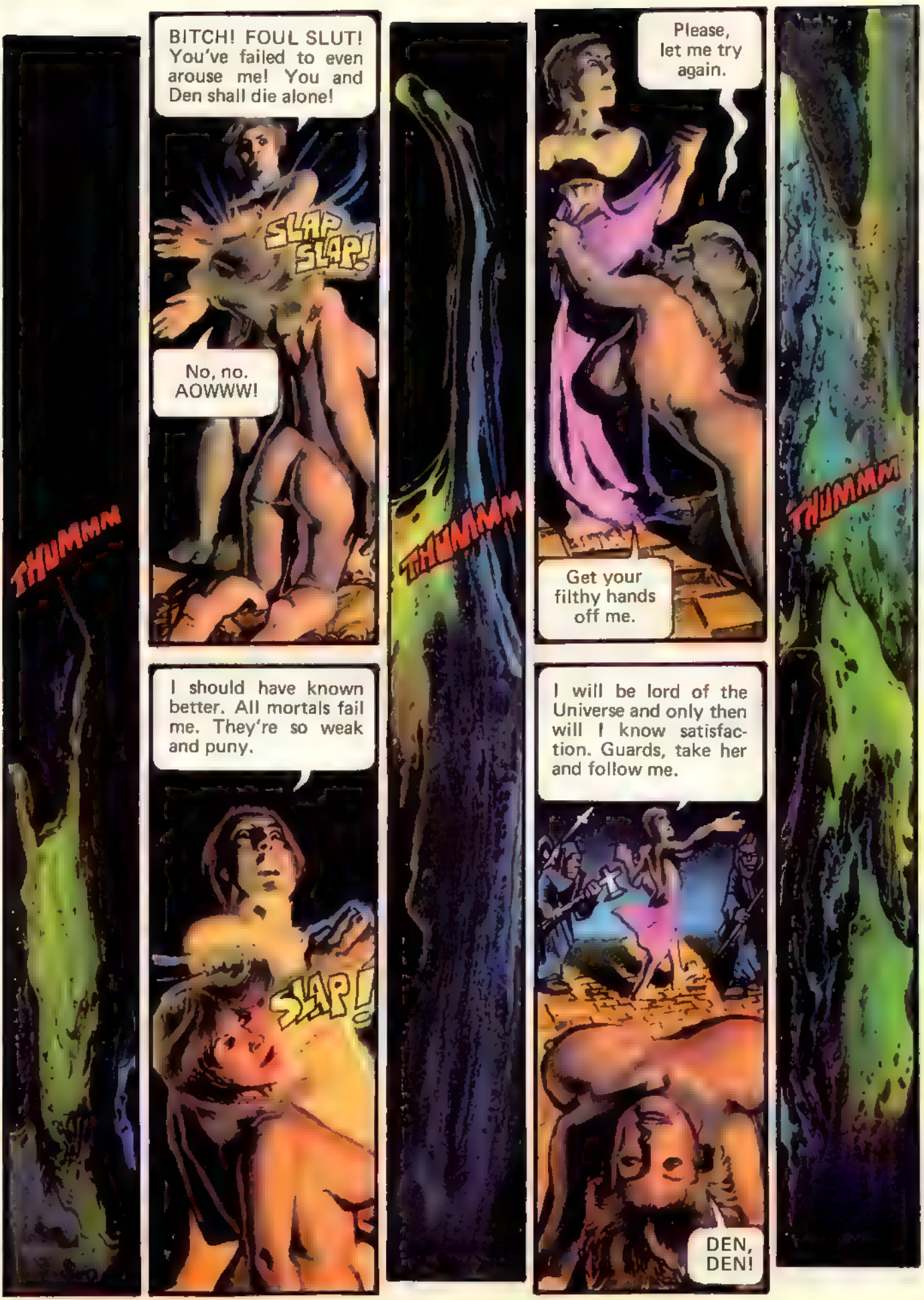
DEN
My God, those winds are getting fierce!
Come, let's scout the perimeter. If Den is near, we'll catch him.
You go around the left. I'll take the right and we'll rejoin on the east side.
And don't try to take him alive. . .just shoot!
THUDDD

UNGH!
Hah, hah!
THUMPH!
Quickly if you value your life, where is Kath held?

STOP! Move away from him, Den.
Ard will be most appreciative of the trophy I will bring to him.
BLAM!
FLUMP!
I knew we would meet if I came after you myself. Come closer. . .a kiss before you die.


THUMMM
BITCH! FOUL SLUT! You've failed to even arouse me! You and Den shall die alone!
SLAP SLAP!
No, no. AOWWW!
I should have known better. All mortals fail me. They're so weak and puny.
SLAP!
THUMMM
Please, let me try again.
Get your filthy hands off me.
I will be lord of the Universe and only then will I know satisfaction. Guards, take her and follow me.
DEN, DEN!
THUMMM

Fools! After her!
CRASH!
Hah! We've got her cornered now.
WHUMCH!
Get her! Get her or you will all die.

THIS WAY!
I saw her
go this way.

By the powers of this magic scepter, I send to the core of all Space and Time, a call.
THUUUUUUUUUUMMMMMMMMM-
Come forth mighty Uluhtc. One who would be your master beckons you.
You will grant me all your strength and be my slave for a living mortal sacrifice. You are bound to do so. It has been ordained from the very beginning.
BUBBLE BUBBLE BUBBLE
THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUMMMMMMMMM!!!!
Come forth Uluhtc. I DEMAND IT. ULUHTC ULUHTC ULUHTC!

Come, Uluhtc.
Your mortal sacrifice
awaits you.
THUUUMMMMN
THUUMMMN
THUUUMMMN
RROAR!
to be continued.

THE WINTER OF THE LAST COMBAT

BY MORA AND GARCIA

WHAT HAS BECOME OF YOU, NINEVEH? DO YOU REMEMBER, NINEVEH, I DEFENDED YOUR WALLS WHEN THEY WERE NOT YET WORN AWAY BY THE SANDS OF TIME...
AND YOU? AND YOU? WHAT HAS BECOME OF YOU, MAD OLD WOMAN CALLING OUT FOR YOUR CHILD IN THE COLD, SURROUNDED BY THE DEAD ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE?
I WAS THAT WARRIOR, I WAS THAT WOMAN...AND I WAS ALSO THIS LIFE FORM ON THAT FAR-OFF PLANET WHOSE RED SUN IS CALLED BETELGOR...
WHO AM I? WHAT AM I? I ONLY KNOW THAT I AM... AND THAT I WANDER CEASELESSLY... AND THAT I MUST LEARN ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT LIVES IN THE UNIVERSE...
Luis Garcia

WHY? WHO WILL ASK ME ONE DAY TO RENDER AN ACCOUNT OF ALL THAT I MIGHT LEARN? I KNOW ONLY THAT IT WILL COME TO PASS...THAT I WILL HAVE TO TELL OF THIS WARRIOR, THIS WOMAN, THIS THING THAT I WAS BENEATH THE LIGHT OF THE RED GIANT. THAT I WILL HAVE TO TELL OF THIS MAN HERE...

FOR I WILL BE AN ATTENTIVE AND PASSIVE WITNESS TO LIFE. I WILL ENDURE THROUGH AN INDETERMINATE INTERVAL OF TIME AND SUBMIT TO A UNIQUE DESTINY...

THERE! IT'S HAPPENED! NOW, I AM HE...THOSE EYES WHICH TRY TO SEE THROUGH THE FALLING SNOW ARE ALREADY MY OWN EYES...

THOSE EYES GAZING ON A HAMLET.. THE FIRST HAMLET I HAVE FOUND IN TWO DAYS OF WANDERING, AFTER THE SHIP CAST ME UP ON A DESERTED SHORE..THE CRUSADE IS OVER! OVER FOREVER! AND HERE I AM ON MY WAY HOME!

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, MY FATHER, WHO WAS LORD OF THE MANOR, WOULD TAKE ME THERE OFTEN WITH HIS FRIENDS ..AND IT WAS MY RIGHT ALREADY TO RECEIVE THE HOMAGE OF THE PEASANTS...AT THAT TIME I WAS NOT YET ABLE TO READ THE EYES OF MEN...AND I TOOK THEIR FEAR FOR RESPECT.

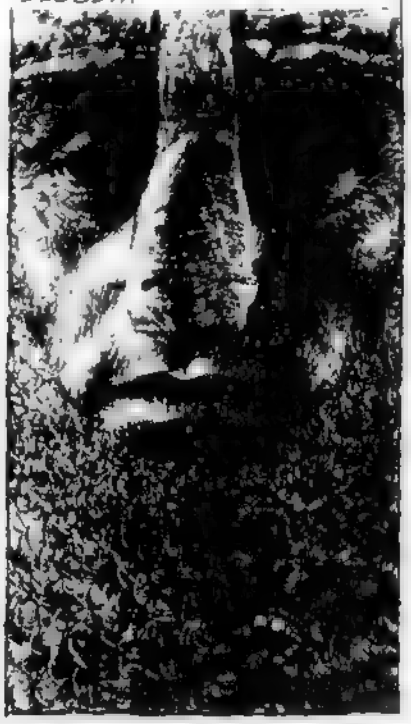
I TOLD MYSELF PROUDLY THAT ONE DAY I WOULD BE LIKE THE AWESOME WARRIORS WHO ACCOMPANIED ME... THAT I WOULD BE AS GAY AND AS STRONG AS THEY.

SO THE DAY CAME...AND IT WENT...AND NOW I AM ENTERING THE HAMLET WITH A LIGHT HEART...

I WAS ABOUT TO SMELL THE SCENT OF FRESHLY BAKED BREAD...THE SMELL OF WOOD BURNING IN FAMILY HEARTHS...I WAS ABOUT TO HEAR THE HAMMER OF THE SMITH HITTING THE ANVIL, THE CRIES OF MERCHANTS SELLING THEIR WARES IN THE OLD SQUARE. PEACE! PEACE! THE SCENTS AND THE SOUNDS OF PEACE, AT LAST!

THAT I MIGHT FORGET, THAT I MIGHT FORGET OTHER SMELLS AND SOUNDS...THAT I MIGHT FORGET THE STENCH OF SMOKE AND OF DEATH WHICH DRIFTED OVER JERUSALEM ON THE DAY WE CONQUERED IT...

THAT I MIGHT FORGET THE CRIES OF THE DEFENDERS, WHOM WE PUT TO THE SWORD ON THAT DAY WHEN OUR HORSES WADED THROUGH BLOOD...



THE CRIES OF THEIR WOMEN...

THAT I MIGHT FORGET WHAT I SAW LATER, WHEN IT WAS ALL OVER, IN THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER: ALL THOSE BLOODY HANDS LIFTED TOWARDS A CHRIST WHOM THEY PRAYED MIGHT BLESS ALL THAT CRIME AND FOLLY! ALL THOSE BLOODY HANDS WERE ALREADY THE GRASPING CLAWS OF PLUNDER!

DO YOU REMEMBER ME, ELEANOR? I TOO WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO CALL MYSELF, LIKE MASTER GODFREY, THE SAVIOR OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER...WE WANTED THE HOLY LAND RESTORED TO THE RIGHTFUL GOD, AND THAT GAVE US THE STRENGTH TO LEAVE EACH OTHER, MY BEAUTIFUL LOVE, MY GENTLE LADY...

AND I DID CONQUER THE HOLY LAND! BUT SO MUCH OF WHAT I SAW OF OURSELVES AND OF THEM FILLED ME WITH DISGUST FOR MEN FOREVER...I DIED THERE, YOU KNOW, IN A WAY...AND MY FAITH DIED ALSO...

...FAITH IN A GOD WHO WOULD ALLOW SUCH THINGS! NOW THAT I HAVE FOUND THIS HAMLET, I WILL WILLINGLY FORGET ALL THAT...BUT...WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?

BARRED DOORS...BARRED WINDOWS... AND THOSE INSCRIPTIONS...

AND THAT WAGON THERE!

THE BLACK DEATH! SO THIS IS IT! YES, I CAN HEAR IT LAUGHING BEHIND ME..."YOU THOUGHT YOU SAW IT ALL...BUT THERE WAS STILL SOMETHING MISSING: AND HERE I AM TO WELCOME YOU!"
IS IT THE HAMMER OR THE ANVIL WHICH I HEAR? NO! THEY ARE NAILING SHUT THE DOORS AND THE WINDOWS...BUT... WHAT'S THAT?
WATCH OUT, BEHIND YOU! THAT HOUSE IS GOING TO BE BURNED! AND THE FLAMES WILL DESTROY THE WITCH WITHIN— SHE'S THE ONLY MEMBER OF THE WHOLE FAMILY WHOM THE BLACK DEATH SPARED!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, PEASANTS? LET THAT GIRL OUT!
FREE HER IMMEDIATELY! DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE ME? I AM YOUR LORD!
HOW DARE YOU THREATEN A MAN OF THE CLOTH?
FOR ME, THERE IS NO LONGER ANY CHURCH!
AND FOR US, THERE ARE NO MORE MASTERS!

YES, SOME RUMORS OF THIS HAD REACHED EVEN THE HOLY LAND...THE FEUDAL LORDS HAD CEASED THEIR DOMESTIC BATTLES IN ORDER TO TAKE PART IN A GREAT SCHEME TO LIBERATE JERUSALEM ..AND TO SHARE IN THE BOOTY THEY IMAGINED TO BE FABULOUS! AND IN THEIR ABSENCE, THE OPPRESSED SERFS, DRIVEN BY TOO MUCH INJUSTICE, HAD BROKEN INTO REVOLT AGAIN.

I WAS WEAKENED BY THE LONG VOYAGE, BY THE FEVER I SUFFERED FROM... BY SO MANY THINGS! BUT I STILL HAD THE POWER TO STRIKE AND STRIKE...

SHE FLOATS THROUGH THE AIR ON WINDS OF THE STORM...SHE WALKS ON WATER...SHE HAS BEEN SEEN IN THE COMPANY OF THE DEVIL UNDER THE MAGIC OAK...

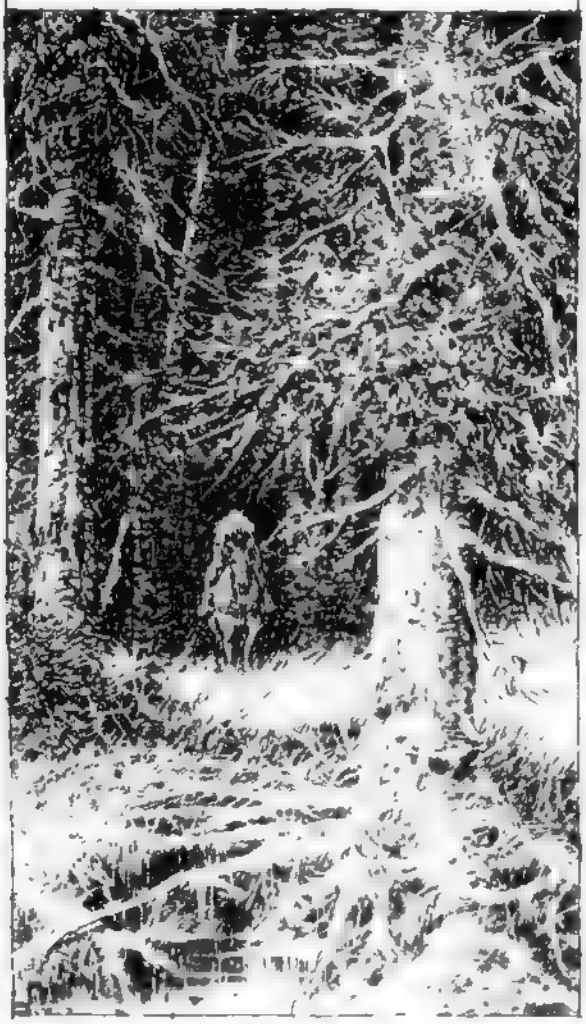
SHE TREMBLES WITH FEAR... I'M TREMBLING MYSELF, BECAUSE OF THE FEVER. SHE PRESSES CLOSE TO ME! THE DEVIL! WITCHCRAFT! THERE IS NOTHING FOR ANY OF US EXCEPT THIS FRAGILE LIFE, AND THE FEAR OF DEATH...

SATAN! WITCHCRAFT! THERE IS ONLY ONE MAN, STRUGGLING AGAINST OTHERS, AGAINST THE WORLD .MAN ENDLESSLY ASKING HIMSELF WHAT IS THE MEANING OF IT ALL.. MAN, FEARING THAT THERE IS NONE!

I IMAGINE I'VE LEFT ENEMIES BEHIND ME. BUT I'M USED TO THAT...

HE MUST PAY FOR WHAT HE'S DONE! WHO'S COMING WITH ME?
COUNT ME IN! !
THE WITCH! SHE IS THE ONE WHO MUST SURELY BE KILLED! DON'T FORGET THAT!

ELEANOR! ELEANOR! I'M COMING BACK TO YOU! I STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO, A FOREST TO PASS THROUGH...BUT THEN I WILL SEE OUR CASTLE! THE NIGHT IS FALLING AND THIS POOR CHILD IS EXHAUSTED!



THIS HUT IN THE CLEARING! I CAME HERE AS A CHILD, AND HUGO THE WOODCUTTER TOLD ME ABOUT THE FOREST, AND ABOUT EVERYONE WHO LIVED AND PASSED THROUGH IT! HUGO MUST BE DEAD BY NOW, BUT THE HUT IS STILL THERE!

Cuidoca 78

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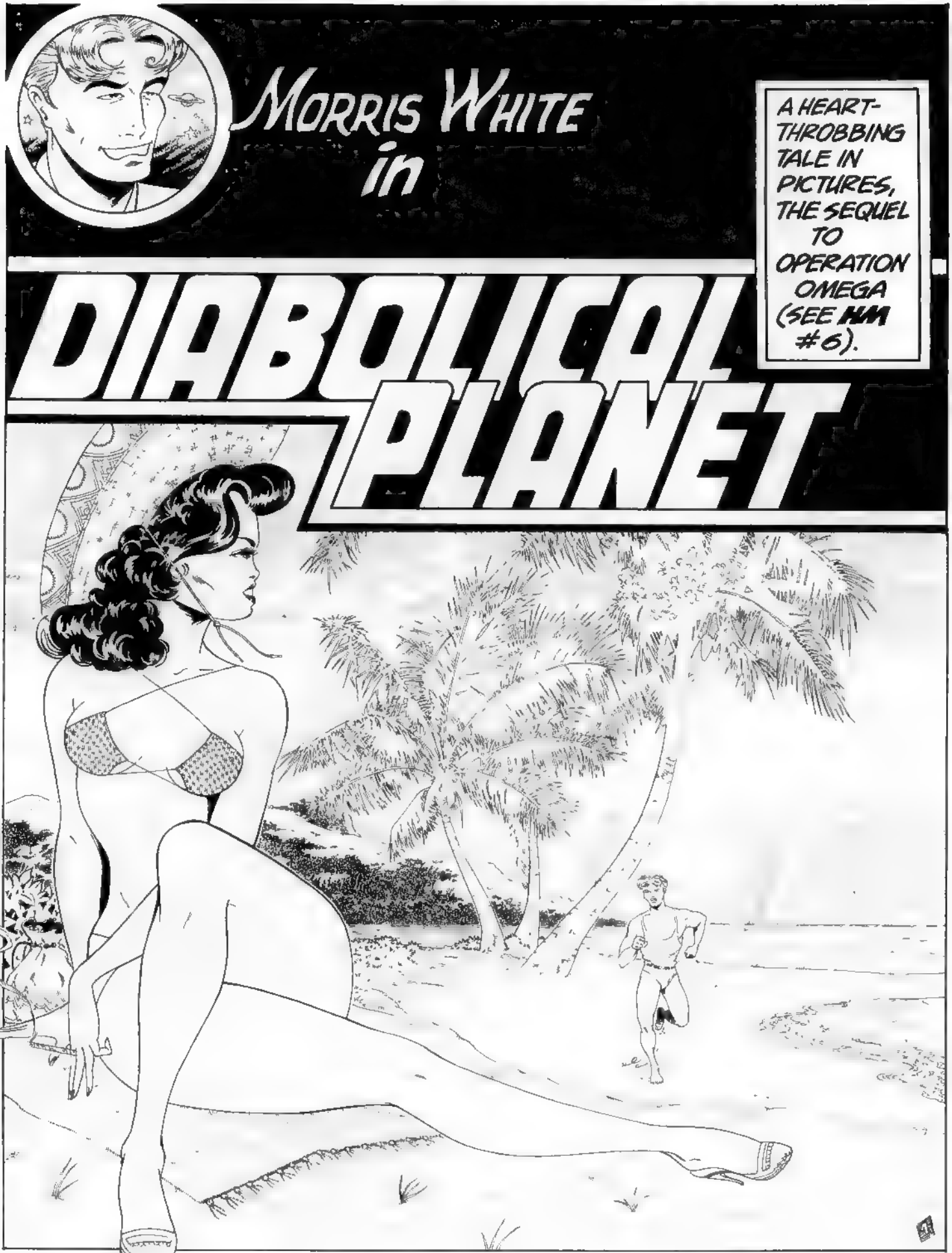
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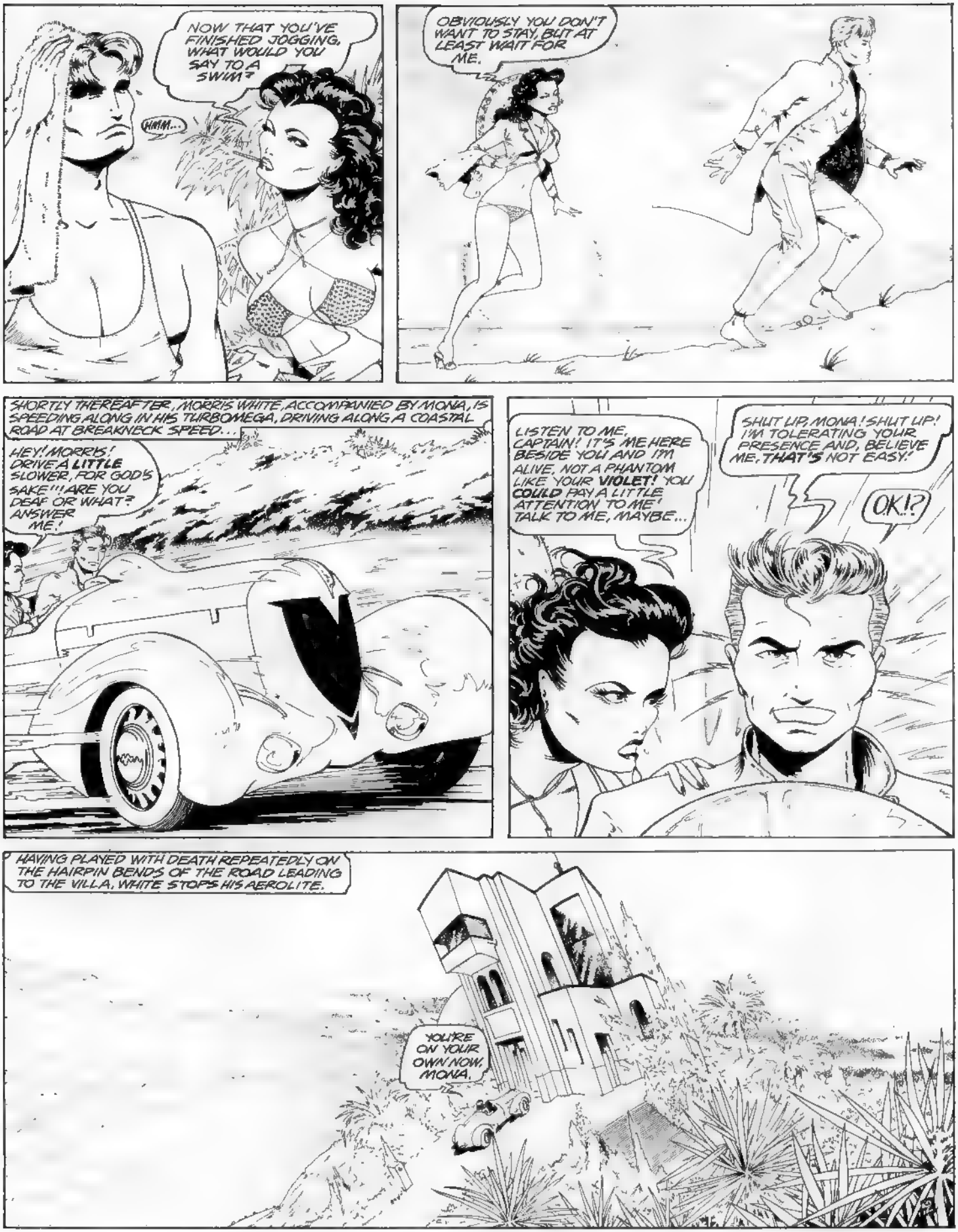
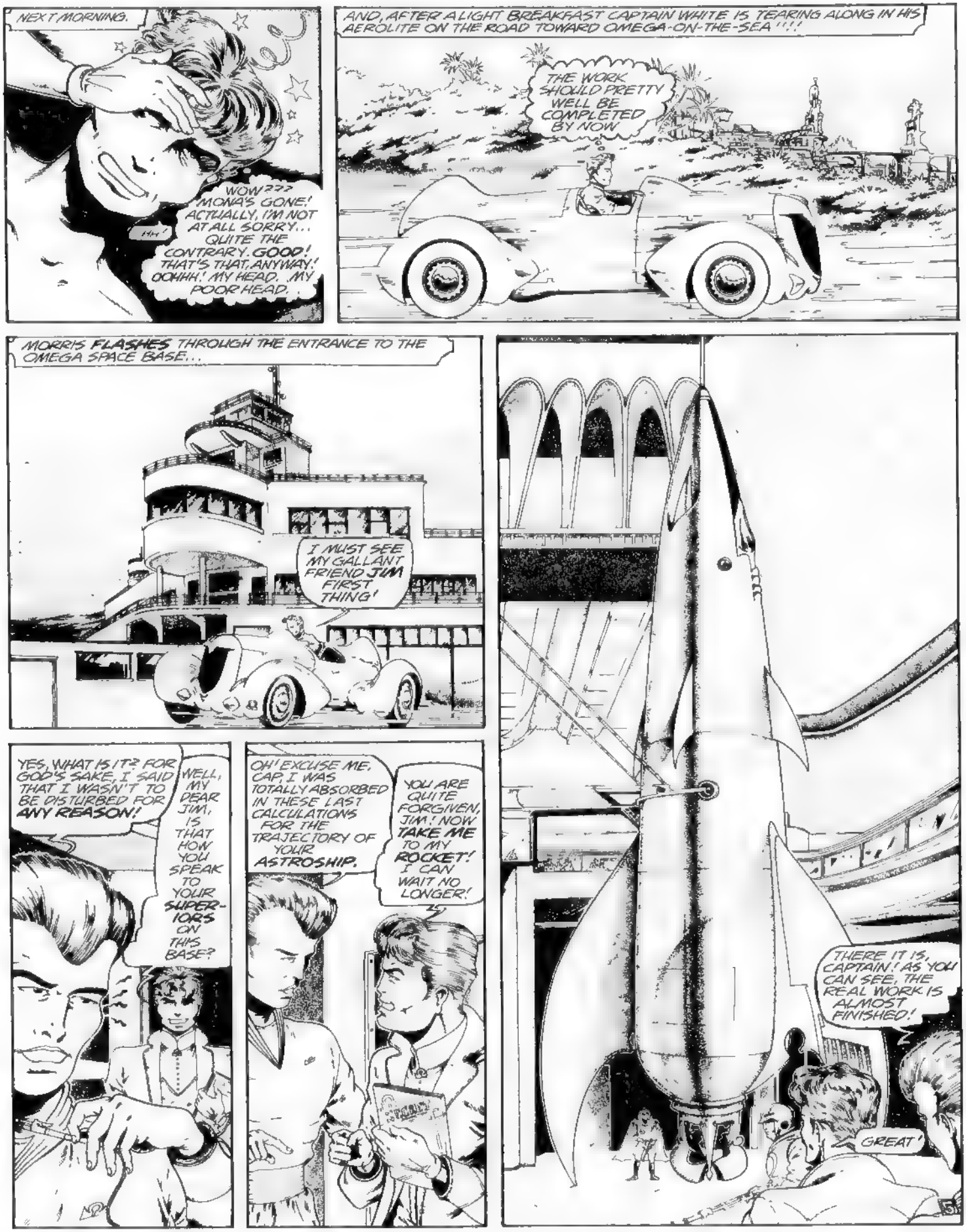
A HEART-THROBBING TALE IN PICTURES, THE SEQUEL TO OPERATION OMEGA (SEE HM #6).
DIABOLICAL PLANET


NOW THAT YOU'VE FINISHED JOGGING, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO A SWIM?
HMM...
OBVIOUSLY YOU DON'T WANT TO STAY, BUT AT LEAST WAIT FOR ME.
SHORTLY THEREAFTER, MORRIS WHITE, ACCOMPANIED BY MONA, IS SPEEDING ALONG IN HIS TURBOMEGA, DRIVING ALONG A COASTAL ROAD AT BREAKNECK SPEED...
HEY! MORRIS! DRIVE A **LITTLE** SLOWER, FOR GOD'S SAKE!!! ARE YOU DEAF OR WHAT? ANSWER ME!
LISTEN TO ME, CAPTAIN! IT'S ME HERE BESIDE YOU AND I'M ALIVE, NOT A PHANTOM LIKE YOUR **VIOLET!** YOU **COULD** PAY A LITTLE ATTENTION TO ME! TALK TO ME, MAYBE...
SHUT UP, MONA! SHUT UP! I'M TOLERATING YOUR PRESENCE AND, BELIEVE ME, **THAT'S** NOT EASY!
O.K!?
HAVING PLAYED WITH DEATH REPEATEDLY ON THE HAIRPIN BENDS OF THE ROAD LEADING TO THE VILLA, WHITE STOPS HIS AEROLITE.
YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN NOW, MONA.

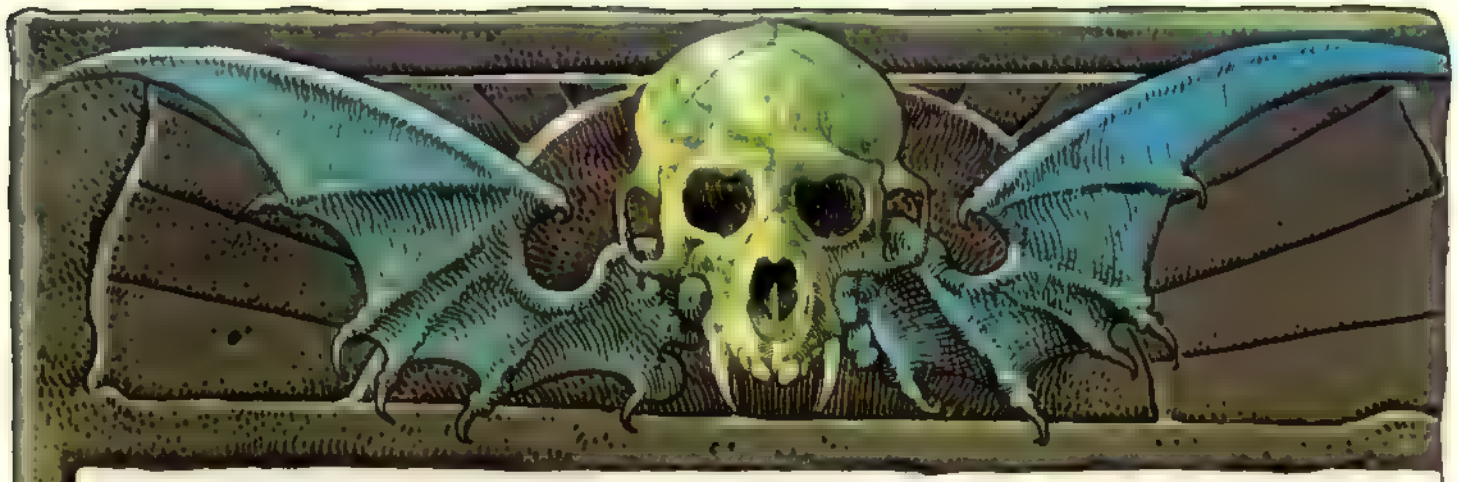
WHAT? AREN'T YOU GOING TO DRIVE ME BACK TO OMEGA-ON-THE-SEA?
NO, YOU CAN GET A TAXI BACK!
WHEW! I GOT RID OF MONA...AND NOW ON TO SERIOUS MATTERS...
MORRIS WALKS TOWARD THE LAB WITH A DETERMINED AIR...
WHERE HE PUTS THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON HIS ASTROSHIP...
THE MOUNTING OF THIS COMPRESSOR WILL REINFORCE THE POWER AND THE DURABILITY OF MY ATOMIC REACTOR!...
...AND, THANKS TO THE NECKLACE OF MAGNETIC PEARLS WHICH HE HAD GIVEN TO HIS SWEET FIANCEE, MORRIS KNOWS SHE IS SOMEWHERE ON...
IT'S ALL THE FAULT OF THAT EVIL DR. VON RICKTUS...
..THE MYSTERIOUS PLANET: AND HIS ONLY DESIRE IS TO FLY TO HER!!!
BY ALL THE PLANETS! MIDNIGHT ALREADY! I'VE DONE ENOUGH TODAY! I'M OFF TO BED...
SIGHE...SURELY HE'S NOT GOING TO WORK ALL NIGHT!!!
AH... WHAT? YES, THAT'S HIM NOW...

OH, THERE YOU ARE, SWEETHEART. YOU KNOW, MY FAVORITE TAXI WASN'T AVAILABLE SO...
IT'S SO LATE, MORRIS! WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO A LITTLE GLASS OF PLUM WINE BEFORE GOING TO BED?
HMM? WHY NOT? IT MIGHT MAKE ME CHANGE MY MIND!!!
HIC!
WHAT A MAN! IT TOOK A QUART OF LIQUOR TO GET HIM TO SAY THAT!
HIP! I MEAN, MAY I SHAY, MONA... THAT YOUR HIPSH... THEIR CHARMSH ESHCAPED ME 'TIL NOW... YESH... HIPSH! IT'SH TRUE!..
AND WITH HIS MIND FOGGED BY ALCOHOL, MORRIS SUCCUMBS TO THESE "CHARMSH" OF THE BEAUTIFUL MONA!
WHAT IS HE SAYING? DEAR GOD, I'M ALMOST AFRAID TO UNDERSTAND...
HMM?
OHHH! VIOLET! YES... YOUR HIPSH... MY SILVER ROCKET. AHHHH! IS SHOOTING TOWARD YOU, MY LOVE... AHHHH HIPPSH!
I CAN SEE THIS RASCAL HAS SOME FUTURE PLANS!
EXCUSE ME, CAPTAIN. I JUST REMEMBERED I HAVE AN IMPORTANT MEETING...
HIPSH'Z


NEXT MORNING.
WOW??? MONA'S GONE! ACTUALLY, I'M NOT AT ALL SORRY... QUITE THE CONTRARY. GOOD! THAT'S THAT, ANYWAY! OOHHH! MY HEAD. MY POOR HEAD.
AND, AFTER A LIGHT BREAKFAST CAPTAIN WHITE IS TEARING ALONG IN HIS AEROLITE ON THE ROAD TOWARD OMEGA-ON-THE-SEA !!!!
THE WORK SHOULD PRETTY WELL BE COMPLETED BY NOW
MORRIS FLASHES THROUGH THE ENTRANCE TO THE OMEGA SPACE BASE...
I MUST SEE MY GALLANT FRIEND JIM FIRST THING!
YES, WHAT IS IT? FOR GOD'S SAKE, I SAID THAT I WASN'T TO BE DISTURBED FOR ANY REASON!
WELL, MY DEAR JIM, IS THAT HOW YOU SPEAK TO YOUR SUPERIORS ON THIS BASE?
OH! EXCUSE ME, CAP, I WAS TOTALLY ABSORBED IN THESE LAST CALCULATIONS FOR THE TRAJECTORY OF YOUR ASTROSHIP.
YOU ARE QUITE FORGIVEN, JIM! NOW TAKE ME TO MY ROCKET! I CAN WAIT NO LONGER!
THERE IT IS, CAPTAIN! AS YOU CAN SEE, THE REAL WORK IS ALMOST FINISHED!
GREAT!

BRAVO, JIM, OLD BOY! YOU AND YOUR CREW HAVE DONE A TERRIFIC JOB!
THANKS, CAP! MY CREW AND I HEARTILY WISH YOU COMPLETE SUCCESS IN YOUR MISSION!
A LITTLE LATER...
IT'S SIMPLE WITH THIS MOUNTING: THE ADDITION OF A COMPRESSOR TO THE REACTOR WON'T POSE ANY PROBLEMS...
BUT ALL THESE CALCULATIONS ARE COMPLETELY WRONG!
YES
I DON'T KNOW IF WE'LL HAVE TIME TO MOUNT THE COMPRESSOR, CAP! YOU KNOW THE PLANS WERE VERY PRECISE!
YES, YES, BUT I'M LEAVING IN FIVE DAYS.. SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO .. I HAVE COMPLETE FAITH IN YOU..
BY GEORGE, I CERTAINLY GO ALL TO PIECES WHEN I'M ON DRY LAND
AT 20 HOURS CAPTAIN WHITE LEAVES THE O.O.T.S *
HMMM .. POOR WHITE... OPERATION OMEGA CERTAINLY TOOK ITS TOLL ON HIM... AND TO THINK HE WAS ONCE ADMIRED BY ALL... IF HE DOES FAIL, HE'LL BE FINISHED. O.O.T.S. WON'T EVER ACCEPT ANOTHER FAILURE!!!
*OMEGA ON THE SEA
YOU BET, CHARLIE! EVERYONE HERE KNOWS PERFECTLY WELL THAT HE'S PLANNING TO FIND THAT TURNIP VIOLET ON GOD-KNOWS-WHAT PLANET!!
WE HAVE RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT CAPTAIN WHITE'S TO LEAVE THE EARTH TOMORROW ON AN ULTRA-SECRET MISSION... AND NOW SPORTS NEWS: IN FOOTBALL, OMEGA-ON THE SEA HAS BEATEN ALPHAVILLE THREE TO NOTHING. IN PROFESSIONAL FRISBEE, OUR ROOKIE STAR, RANKIE, IS ACTUALLY IN THE LEAD..

THE DAY ARRIVES... ON THE BASE, THEY NERVOUSLY AWAIT THE MOMENT
CAN YOU HEAR ME CLEARLY, CAPTAIN?
VERY WELL, JIM! LOUD AND CLEAR!
GOOD-BYE AND GOOD LUCK, CAP! EVERYTHING WILL GO FINE! I'M SURE OF IT!
YES, YES, WE HOPE SO! SO LONG, JIM!
I GUESS JIM DIDN'T GET THE GO AHEAD FROM THOSE IDIOT BUREAUCRATS ON THE BASE TO INSTALL MY COMPRESSOR... OH, WELL!
I WILL LEAVE THE EARTH WITHOUT REGRETS, FOR THE WOMAN I LOVE IS NO LONGER ON THIS PLANET!!!
MORRIS CLIMBS INTO HIS ROCKET AND SETTLES IN AT THE COMMANDS...
5 4 3 2 1
READY FOR TAKE-OFF...
...FROM THE PANORAMIC TERRACE OF THE PALM HOTEL, MONA LOOKS ON AS THE MAN SHE LOVES TAKES OFF.
I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT IT ACTUALLY MAKES ME SICK AT HEART TO SEE HIM LEAVE...
TO BE CONTINUED...



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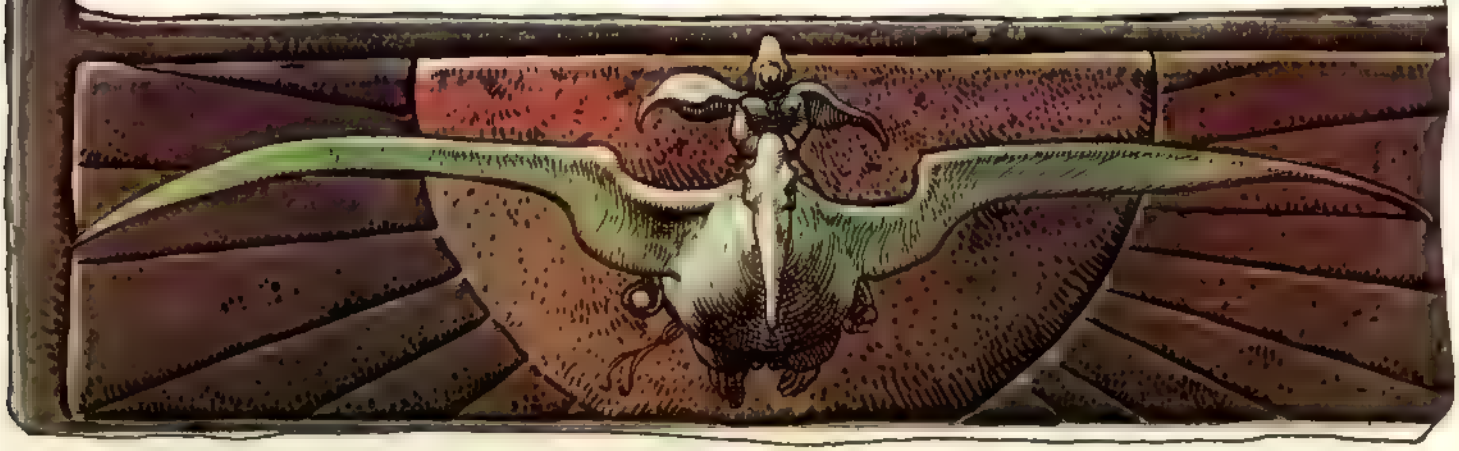


AN AGE PASSED UPON THE EARTH:
A SIGH IN ETERNITY. EARTH, CONQUERED, REMAINED BENEATH THE POWER OF THE GODS AND THOSE WHO SERVED THEM.
IN THE MOUNTAINS, IN THE WILD JUNGLES, IN THE DESERTS, AND ON THE VIOLENT SEAS, MEN WAITED IN VAIN FOR THEIR DELIVERANCE.
YRAGAEL WAS DEAD:
AS DEAD AS ANY WHO HAD EVER LOST HIS SOUL AND HIS BODY.
OF HIS UNION WITH THE SORCERER AND THE CITY WAS BORN THE TALE OF REBIRTH
THAT WAS TO COME THROUGH A BEING WHO WEPT BENEATH THE STARS IN THE DESERT:
OUTCAST, REJECTED BY ALL, UNAWARE OF HIS OWN FATHER'S NAME:
BUT ALL MEN WOULD COME TO LEARN THE NAME OF:

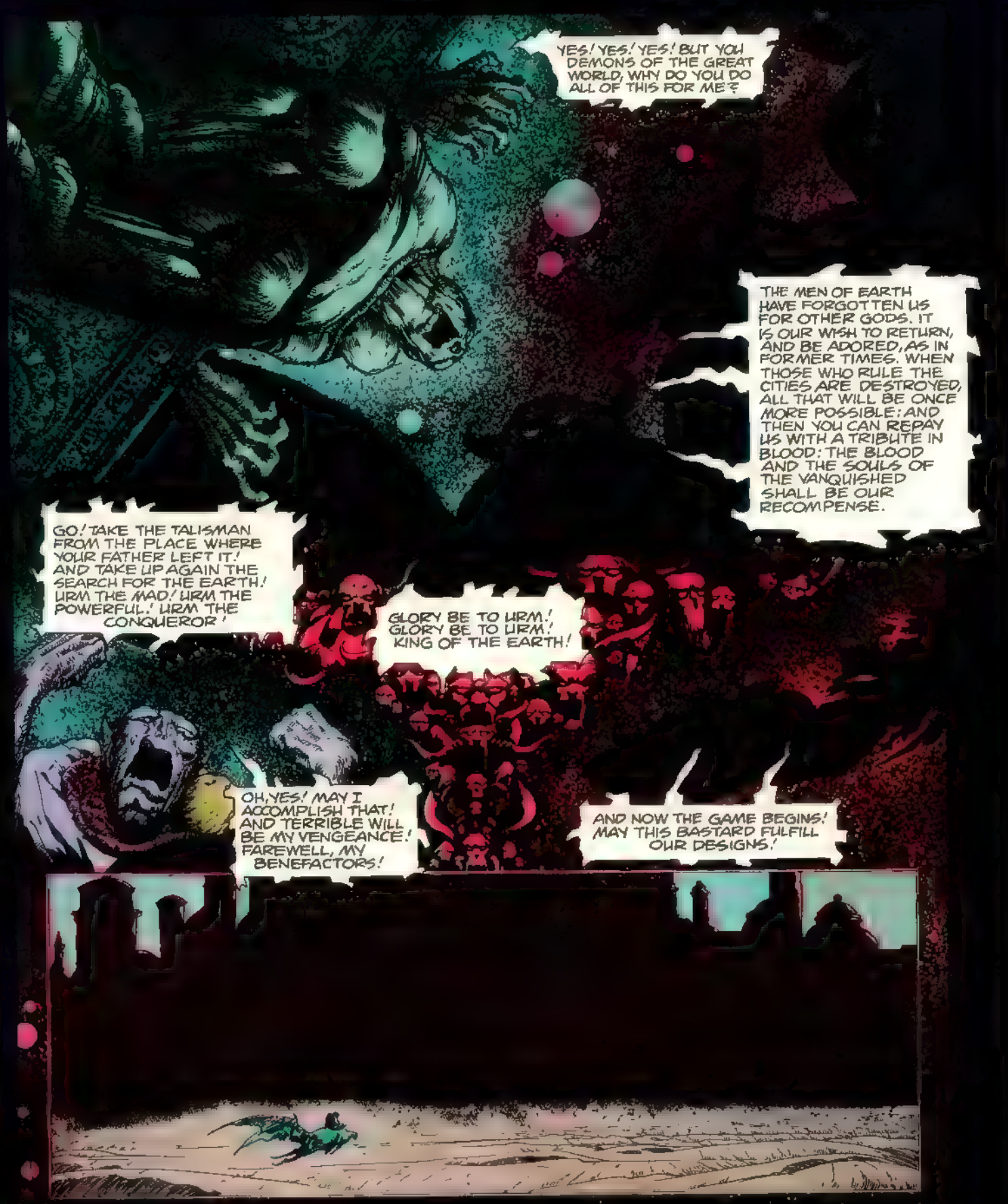
URM THE MAD

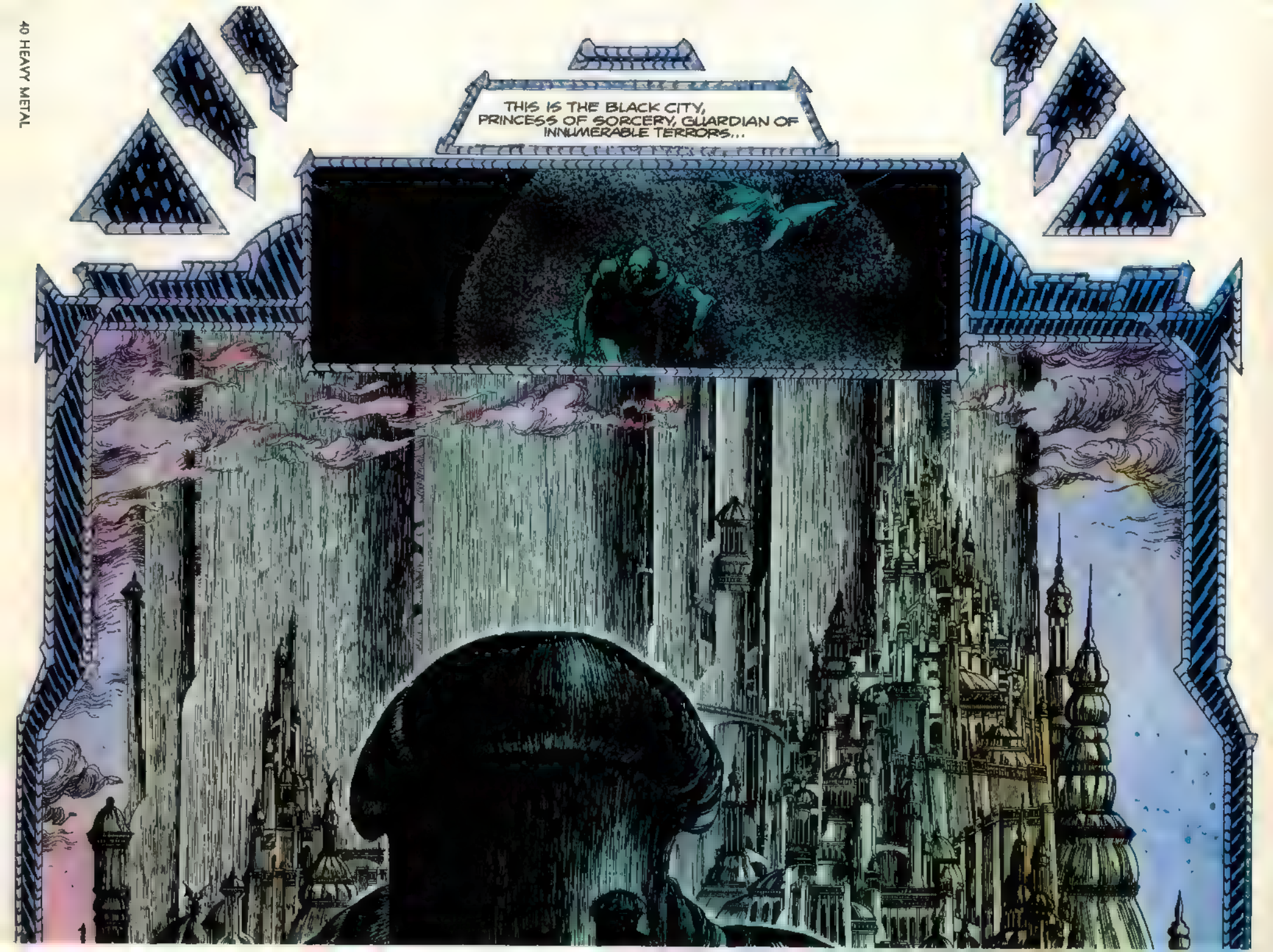
AHAHAH
AHEEEEE!!

WOE TO THOSE WHO HAVE CAUSED ME WOE! MISERY TO HIM WHO HAS FORGED MY FACE!
HOOO! HOOO! HOOO! WOE IS ME...
WOE TO THE GODS 'HATRED AND LOATHING' HOOO! HOOO! VENGEANCE!
YOU! MAKING ALL THAT NOISE!
DO NOT ABUSE MY EARTHLY FORM...
FOR I AM OTHER...

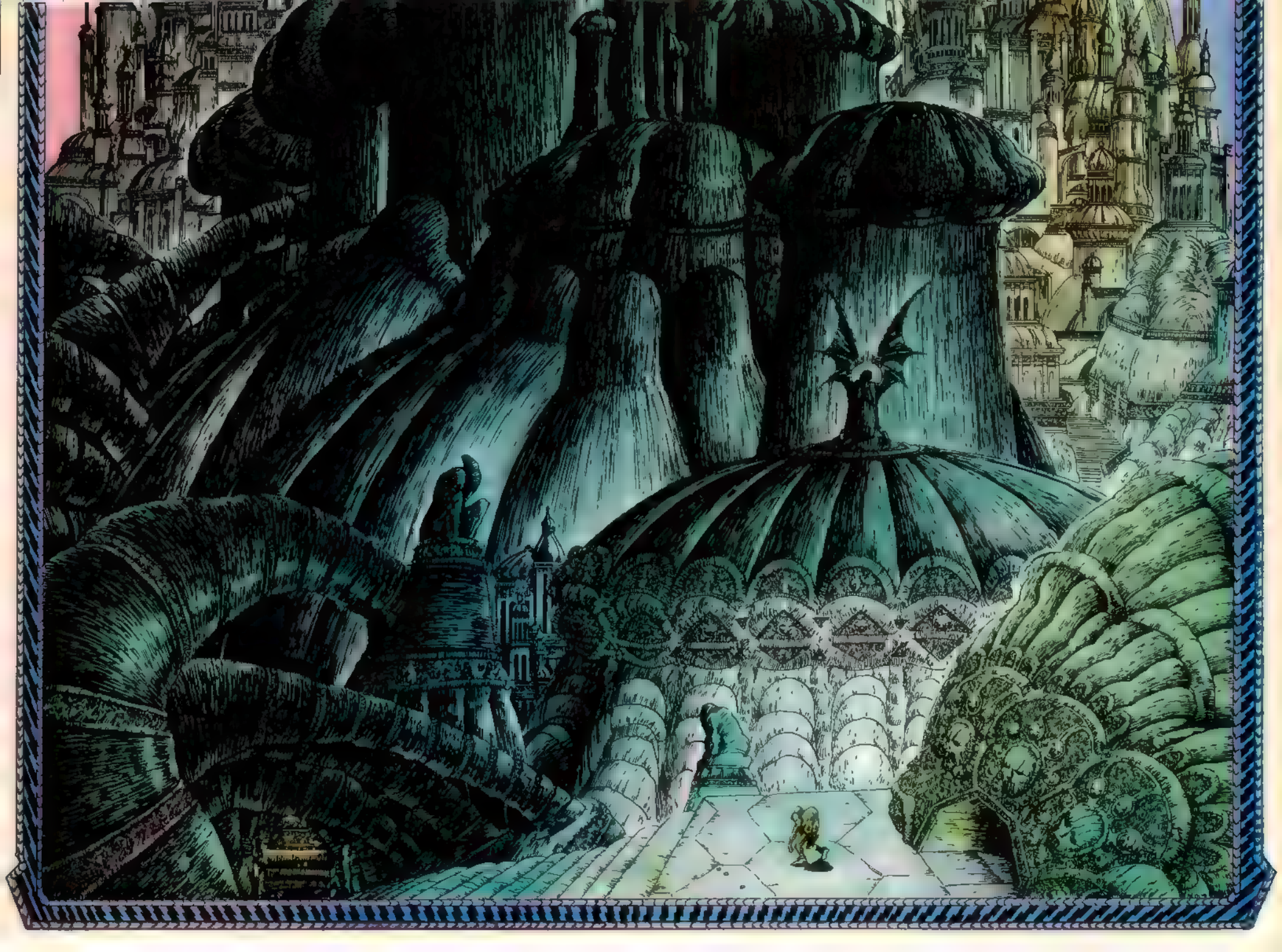
WHENCE I HAVE COME, YOU ARE AWAITED! FOLLOW!

URM! URM THE MAD!
HAIL TO THE HEIR! ALL HAIL!
LISTEN. WE HAVE SOUGHT YOU THAT WE MIGHT TEAR YOU AWAY FROM YOUR MORTAL DESTINY AND GRANT YOU THAT WHICH IS YOUR RIGHT: FOR YOU ARE DESTINED TO REIGN UPON THE EARTH: URM, HE WHO IS THE CLOVEN ONE.
YRAGAEL, THE SAD PRINCE, WAS YOUR FATHER: THE SORCERESS AND THE BLACK CITY ARE YOUR MOTHERS: YOU MUST REIGN, AND WITH OUR HELP AND THE TALISMAN OF STRENGTH, YOU SHALL SIT AGAIN UPON THE THRONE OF THE THREE CITIES.
ME? ME! THE EXILE, THE OUTCAST? SON OF THE KING? HOOO! HOOO! GODS WHO HIDE IN THE STARS, WHAT CRUEL GAME IS THIS?
URM WILL BE KING! URM, URM WILL BE KING!
THUS YOU ARE, BUT LISTEN: IN THE HEART OF THE BLACK CITY, NEAR TO THE WELLS WHERE YOUR FATHER WILL ONE DAY RETURN TO SET OUT UPON THE OCEAN OF MID-EARTH, THERE LIES THE TALISMAN, WHICH SIGNIFIES THE GATHERING OF THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH. GO THERE AND TAKE IT.' THE CITY ITSELF WILL GUIDE YOU TO IT.'
BUT BEWARE OF THE MAN WITH A LION'S FACE, OF THE FACELESS PRIESTS, AND OF ALL THOSE WHO DANCE WITH THEM...
YES! YES! I SHALL TAKE CARE! BUT COULD YOU... MY BODY... COULD YOU GIVE ME ANOTHER FACE? FOR PITY'S SAKE, ANOTHER...
NO, THAT WE CANNOT DO. BUT THINK: ALL THOSE WHO KISS YOU UPON THAT FACE SHALL GIVE YOU THE SIGN OF THEIR SUBMISSION!

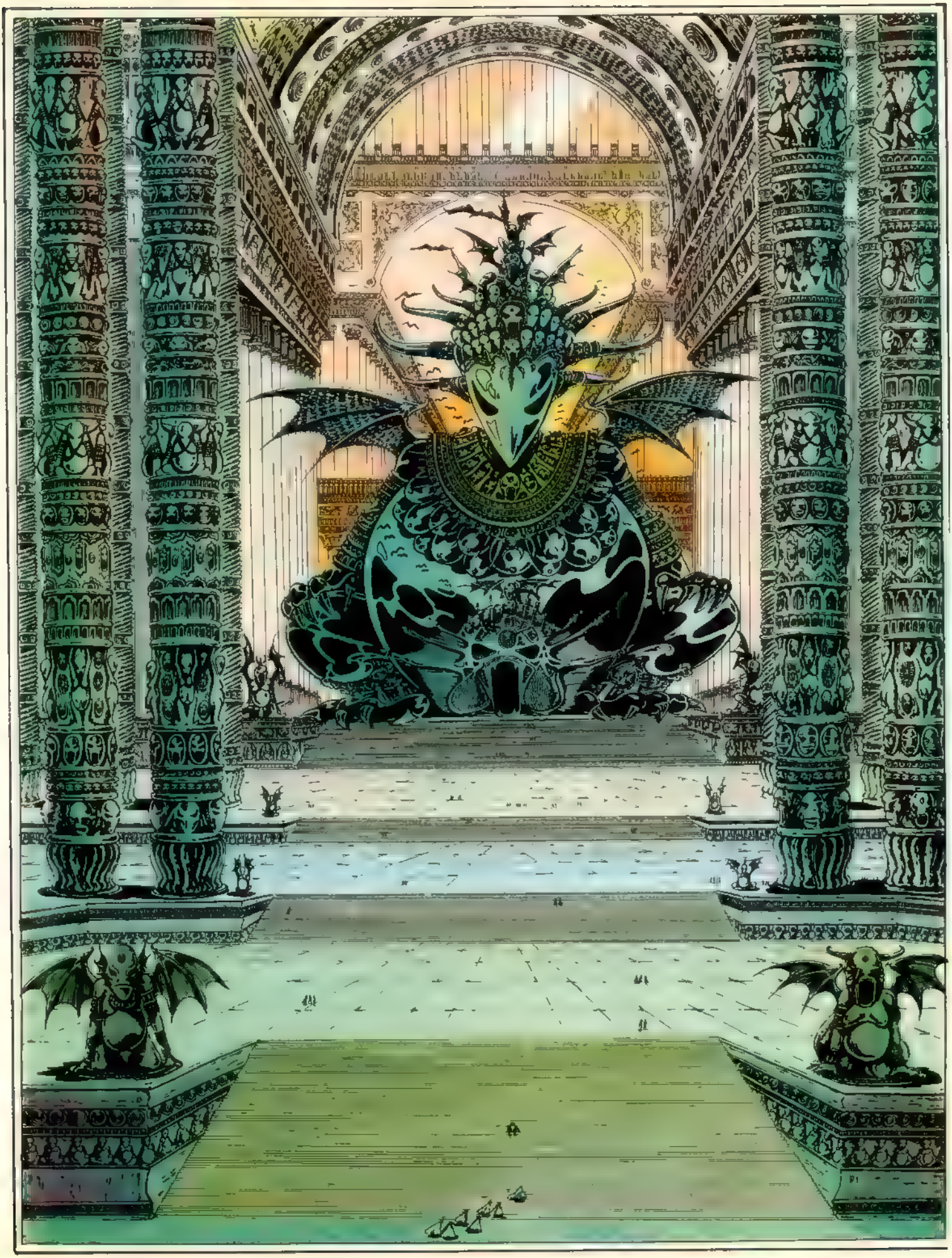

YES! YES! YES! BUT YOU DEMONS OF THE GREAT WORLD, WHY DO YOU DO ALL OF THIS FOR ME?
THE MEN OF EARTH HAVE FORGOTTEN US FOR OTHER GODS. IT IS OUR WISH TO RETURN, AND BE ADORED, AS IN FORMER TIMES. WHEN THOSE WHO RULE THE CITIES ARE DESTROYED, ALL THAT WILL BE ONCE MORE POSSIBLE: AND THEN YOU CAN REPAY US WITH A TRIBUTE IN BLOOD: THE BLOOD AND THE SOULS OF THE VANQUISHED SHALL BE OUR RECOMPENSE.
GO! TAKE THE TALISMAN FROM THE PLACE WHERE YOUR FATHER LEFT IT! AND TAKE UP AGAIN THE SEARCH FOR THE EARTH! URM THE MAD! URM THE POWERFUL! URM THE CONQUEROR!
GLORY BE TO URM! GLORY BE TO URM! KING OF THE EARTH!
OH, YES! MAY I ACCOMPLISH THAT! AND TERRIBLE WILL BE MY VENGEANCE! FAREWELL, MY BENEFACTORS!
AND NOW THE GAME BEGINS! MAY THIS BASTARD FULFILL OUR DESIGNS!

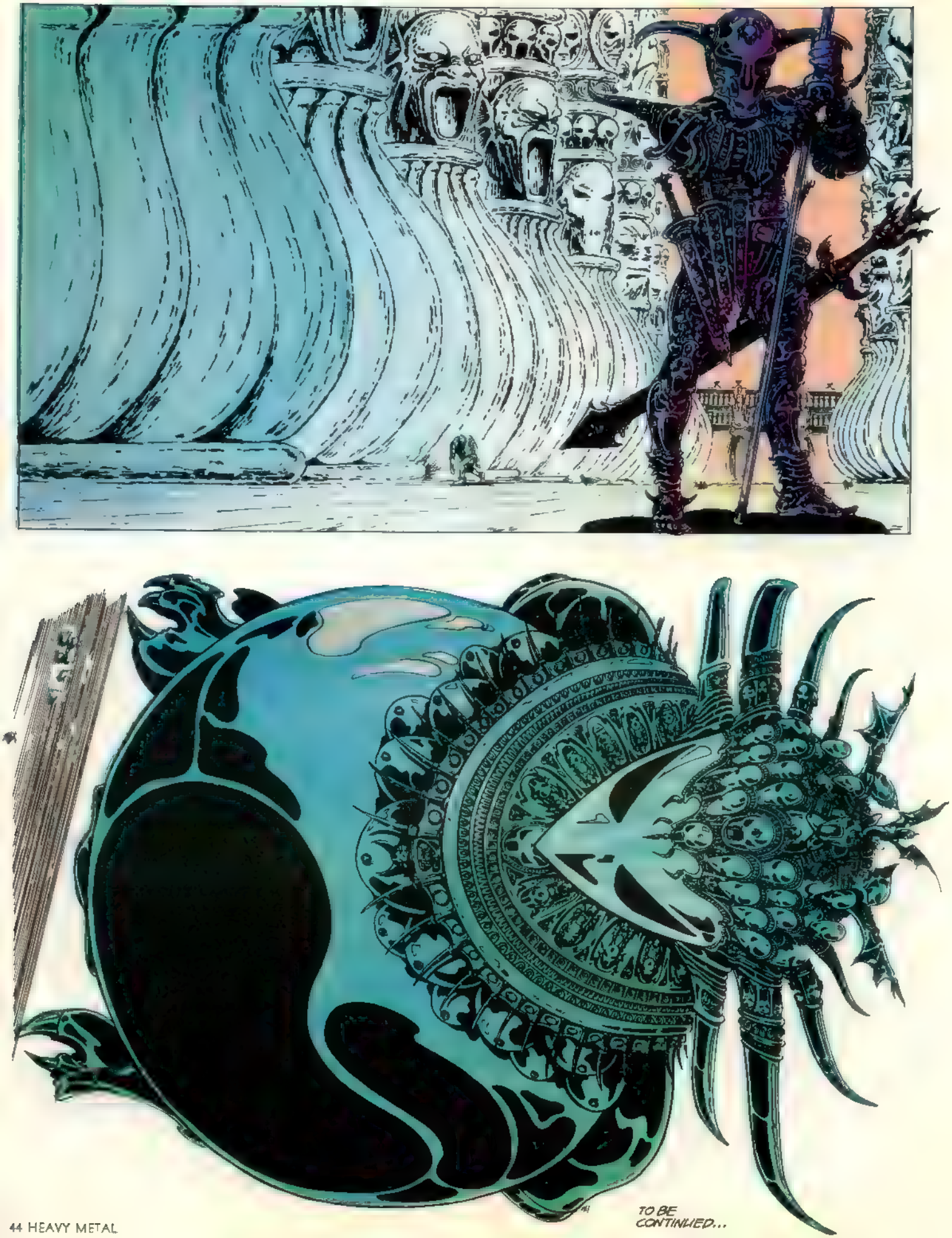

THIS IS THE BLACK CITY, PRINCESS OF SORCERY, GUARDIAN OF INNUMERABLE TERRORS...

THIS IS THE BLACK CITY,
PRINCESS OF SORCERY, GUARDIAN OF
INNUMERABLE TERRORS...

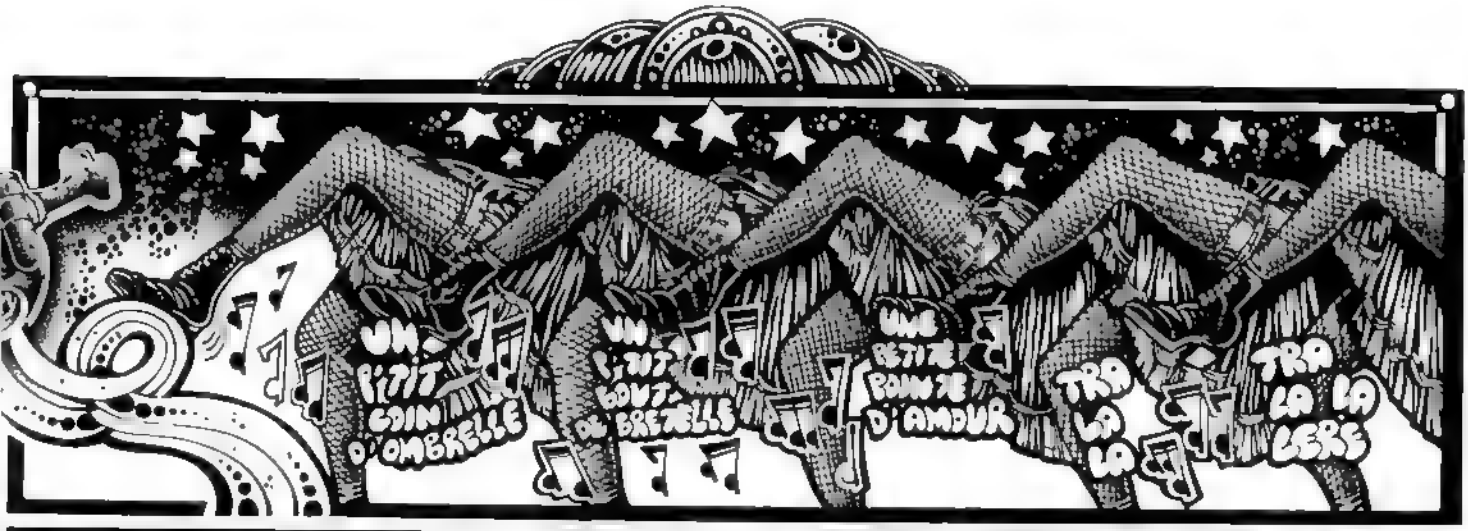


HA!HA! THE MADMAN RETURNS TO THE PALACE!
OH GRACIOUS URM, GREAT AND GLORIOUS. HA!HA!HA!
HIS MAJESTY, URM THE MAGNIFICENT!




TO BE
CONTINUED...

WORLD FAMOUS...
CLAP! CLAP!
CLAP!
CLAP!
WHY DON'T YOU COME OVER ONE OF THESE DAYS?
BUT, MY DEAR CHAP, YOU LIVE SO FAR AWAY!
LADIES AND GENTS!
ALLOW ME NOW
TO PRESEN
THE EXHILARATING
THE ADORABLY DARING
THE BEWITCHING...
THOSE MAGICIANS ARE REALLY SOMETHING SPECIAL, DON'T YOU THINK?
WELL, YOU KNOW, OLD BOY, THERE ARE SOME PRETTY SURPRISING THINGS WHERE I LIVE, TOO!
I CAN BELIEVE IT!
LES FRENCH FOLLIES


UN P'TIT COIN D'OMBRELLE
UN P'TIT BOUT DE BRETZELLS
UNE PETITE PANNE D'AMOUR
TRA LA LA
TRA LA LA LÈRE

MARVELOUS, DON'T YOU THINK? WHAT GAMS, WHAT CURVES!
ABSOLUTELY! BUT IT'S GETTING LATE AND WE SHOULD BE GOING.

I'LL COME WITH YOU.

xit
Cloak Room

JUST THE SAME, IT'S INCREDIBLE THAT THE WHOLE CITY HAD TO DISAPPEAR IN ORDER TO PERPETUATE WHAT MADE IT GLORIOUS...
I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT...
MOULIN ROUGE
Lecuel

Photograph by Cathy McGinty

Venus—Ah, Venus

by Richard A. Lupoff

You can generally tell pretty early what kind of day it's going to be, and it had already been a lousy day for Al Lambert when he got home around three o'clock and found the alien slouched in his easy chair with its feet on the table.

Lambert lived in what his landlord managed to call a furnished efficiency on the top floor of an old brown-shingle on Walnut Street below Shattuck. That put the rooming house in one of Berkeley's rather nondescript multiracial neighborhoods. It was neither student ghetto nor poverty-belt nor old-line money nor radical-commune territory: just a rooming house in just a neighborhood. And Al lived there with a feisty orange-and-cream tomcat named Dart.

Or what was left of Dart, anyhow. Somehow, over the years before moving in with Lambert, Dart had managed to lose one eye, half an ear, and all but a couple of inches of tail. That didn't mean that Dart was anybody's patsy. On the contrary, he was as tough as he was mean, and he was as mean as could be. Whenever Dart stood with his feet dug in, claws extended, and that stump of a tail twitching like the lead bat in the

Venus—Ah, Venus, copyright © 1977, by Richard Lupoff

warm-up circle when Mitchell Page was waiting for his turn against some poor simp of a pitcher, anybody with half a brain didn't stick around to quarrel, be he dog, cat, raccoon, or burglar.

Once in a very great while, Al Lambert would feel something incredibly heavy crawl into his lap and look down to see that it was Dart. That happened about once a year, twice if the planets were properly aligned, and it never, never happened if there was anybody else around to see it.

Al looked at the alien and just stood there. Coming home to find a creature with scaly blue skin, ruby-faceted eyes, and tentacles instead of fingers — those were just the most striking features of the alien, by the way; they were by no means the only things unearthly about it — was an unprecedented experience.

Even in Berkeley, California, USA, earth, in the latter half of the twentieth century.

The alien looked back at Al with no sign of startlement at all, and in the most equable voice imaginable, as if it were accustomed to addressing creatures as different from itself as it was, of course, from Al, said, "How are you doing today?"

Al groped for his other chair, a rickety wooden kitchen seat, since the alien was firmly settled in the easy chair. He planted himself shakily on the scratched and many-times-varnished seat, and since he couldn't think of anything else to do at the moment, he told the alien how he was doing Honestly and succinctly.

"Lousy."

"That's too bad," the alien replied sympathetically, "would you care to expand at all on your statement?"

"I don't know why I should. After all, I come home from a hard day and find a perfect stranger sitting in my one and only comfortable chair. I won't make any point of your being nonhuman — in Berkeley we learn pretty fast to be tolerant of others. But still that gives you no right to barge in here uninvited, and, in fact, when I'm not even at home, and help yourself to my best chair."

Al was starting to get annoyed. That was a bad habit of his. He'd start talking about something in a perfectly neutral context and gradually work himself up to what on occasion amounted to nothing less than the proverbial towering rage.

"Come to think of it, what else have you been helping yourself to? I don't suppose you've drunk up my last quart of beer, by any chance. Or eaten up my wheat germ granola. Or gone hunting around for my stash and smoked it all. Or have you?"

"Certainly not," said the alien. His scales seemed to slide over one another when he spoke. His inflection remained its same calm self as ever, and his bland face seemed to be purely functional in nature; that is, his eyes, nose, and mouth were used for seeing, breathing, and speaking, respectively. They did not register emotion.

Instead, his sliding scales seemed to generate an electrical field of some sort which produced a visible aura about him. Lambert decided that colored auras were actually a pretty good way of expressing feelings. Instead of raising or lowering one's voice in a series of growls, snarls, squeaks, moans, and other modulations, all the while maneuvering one's facial muscles into an accompanying orchestration of smiles, smirks, winces, grimaces, frowns, sneers, moués, and tics, one need only flash the traditional red of anger, green of envy, gold of contentment, black of despair, and so on.

When the alien denied having consumed Lambert's perishables, he — for by now Al had decided that the alien was indeed a he and not an it — and certainly not a she, more's the pity — he flashed an aura of a deeply phosphorescent midnight purple, a tint distantly related to but easily distinguishable from his own pigmentation. Al took this aura to represent sincerity, possibly mixed with just a touch of injured innocence

"You don't wish to tell me why you're feeling so lousy?" the alien repeated in his blandly uninflected but otherwise idiomatic English.

"I already told you that I didn't see why I should tell you about my private affairs," Al replied. "On the other hand, I don't see any reason why I shouldn't, either. I certainly haven't been doing anything illegal. Even if you were from the CIA, the IRS, or the county sheriff's office, I could tell you everything I've done since I woke up this morning, and the chances are you'd be nothing but bored."

"Please," said the alien, "I'm really very interested."

His scales flashed a sort of mauve, giving Al a feeling that the alien was sympathetic and interested and quite willing to listen to a catalog of woes. Al had quite a catalog of woes, and while he had often been in the habit of enumerating them to Dart, the prospect of having an articulate listener for a change was attractive.

"Well, I went up to unemployment first thing and they said that my benefits were about to run out. Then I went up to the food stamps office and they said that there was a new set of federal guidelines and they were going to cut me off at the end of the month.

"I decided to take a walk on Telegraph and see what was new with the street artists and what was new in the bookstores and record stores, and I saw my girl with some creep fraternity kid. I don't know what she sees in those clean-cut types, but when I went over to say hello she cut me dead, so I guess that's all over between us.

"Finally, I came home and the landlord was sweeping the sidewalk and when he saw me he said if I didn't pay my rent by the end of the week he was going to evict. It's almost time for the new quarter to start at the university, and he wants to rent my room to somebody a little more, as he puts it, stable and reliable."

"I see," said the alien, his aura flashing a deeper and more sympathetic tone than ever. "That is a remarkable series of misfortunes. I should think you would be eager to accept an opportunity to change your luck."

Al got up from the wooden chair and walked over to the door. He opened it, looked into the hall to assure himself of privacy, then reclosed and double-locked it the way he sometimes did when he had company of an intimate sort and wished emphatically not to be interrupted, and returned to his place. He looked around the room itself and saw that aside from himself and the alien only Dart was present; the bulge of Dart's belly and the pleased quality of his purrs indicating that he had forayed out the window in Al's absence and returned with a full stomach.

"Change my luck?" Al hitched his wooden chair toward the overstuffed one occupied by the alien and leaned forward attentively. "Change my luck how? You aren't pushing something, are you?"

"My dear sir," the alien exclaimed, his voice as level as ever but his aura flashing with an intensity Al could barely compare even to the Glen McKay Head Lights show he had seen at a Jefferson Airplane concert once when his girl turned up with a spare ticket and invited him to attend as her guest. "My dear sir, I am not here in the role of an importer or distributor of anything. What I offer, in fact, is something very much the opposite."

The alien rose from Al's favorite easy chair and walked to a shadowy corner of the room, where he bent with surprising suppleness and opened a receptacle which Al had not previously noticed. It was of a dark, glossy material, and of a size and shape somewhere between that of a lady's large handbag and a smart businessman's attaché case. In fact, it bore a slight resemblance to a leather case which Lambert had once found misplaced or abandoned on a number 58 bus and pawned for a few dollars after a few days' perusal of the classifieds failed to turn up an offer of a reward.

The alien rose again and returned to the table, placing a small object on the center of the table, having first cleared a small area of old newspapers, empty cups, and filled ashtrays.

"What I have in mind," the alien said, "is that you might wish to leave this locale. Exchange it, so to speak, for more congenial surroundings. If you follow my drift."

"I guess I do," Al said, stalling for time. "But I want to ask you some questions first. Is that okay?"

His mind was racing back over the alien's words while his eye examined the object on the table. He tried to remember every story he'd ever read, heard, or seen dramatized of people getting suckered into fatally irretrievable commitments in their greed to take advantage of seemingly innocuous offers. Most of those he could recall involved deals with the devil. In most, the greedy human wound up forfeiting his soul and suffering the fires of eternal damnation as the penalty for his greed.

But this was no devil: this was a blue, scaly alien with red eyes and tentacles instead of fingers, and besides, Al didn't believe in souls anyhow so there was nothing to worry about in that concern. He couldn't remember very clearly any stories about deals with aliens, and the one or two that rustled tantalizingly around the rearmost nodes of his brain seemed to show Man emerging on top anyhow, once everything got sorted out.

Still, it didn't hurt to be cautious.

The alien had agreed to answer as many questions as Al wanted to ask him; he was in no hurry — earth was quite a comfortable little planet for him to visit and he was enjoying the stimulating intellectual companionship which he found here.

"Okay," said Al, "the first thing I want to know is, how come you speak English? I hope you aren't going to give me that corny old line about monitoring radio and television broadcasts.I've heard that in so many sci-fi flicks I'm sick of it."

"As a matter of fact," the alien said, slithering rather gracefully onto the kitchen chair since Al had moved to the easy chair when the alien vacated it, "as a matter of fact, I tried to monitor your transmissions but I found them such a mélange of the vapid and the offensive that I had to give up. I hope that I haven't offended you by saying that. When I mention your transmissions, I refer to transmissions originating on this planet, not holding you personally to account for them."

The alien's scales slid and scraped a bit against one another and emitted an aura of blended orange and rose tints shot with a few pure white sparks. Clearly, the alien was being subjected to the strongest of emotions. Al hastened to reassure the alien that he was not offended, not because he cared particularly whether the creature felt unhappy or not, but rather because it seemed increasingly clear that the alien might have something worthwhile to dispense, and Al didn't wish to cut himself out of anything good.

"Well, no," the alien went on, "the way I learned English was via the little device that I brought with me." He reached behind one ear — the alien's ears weren't shaped *anything* like human ones and weren't located on the sides of the head, either — and after a moment's exertion removed a small metallic device about the size of a bottle cap. He held it under Al's nose for a couple of seconds, then stuck it behind his ear again.

"You see? This picks up whatever communication is going on around me and translates it into my own language so I hear both the ambient, or original, version — and a rendering into my own idiom. Pretty soon I can communicate in the local vernacular."

Al thought that was a very useful little machine and told the alien so. "Could you talk to anybody besides me?" Al asked.

"Oh, yes," and a series of colors cascaded over the alien's body as if to emphasize as well as punctuate his affirmation. "Would you like me to talk to someone else? Here." And the alien, turning so as to face Dart, emitted a series of catlike purrs, meows, chuckles, and croons.

Dart lifted his distinctively characterized if rather unhandsome face in surprise and responded to the alien.

The alien produced a fresh series of feline noises and Dart dropped his head, slitted his remaining yellow orb, and pretended to go to sleep, all the while maintaining a careful surveillance of his surroundings as cats so often do.

"That was pretty funny," Al commented, "but how do I know you really said anything to each other? How do I know it wasn't just a lot of noise? What did Dart say, anyhow?"

The alien reached a surprisingly long arm toward the one-eyed cat and dangled a cluster of tentacles limply for the animal's approval before kneading Dart's back and shoulders and winning a series of loud purrs as his reward.

"He told me that he was over at the back door of the Burger Balloon today and met a delightful female with whom he shared the pleasures of the garbage pail as well as those of, ah, feline amour. He had an altogether delightful time, and further has an appointment with the female to perform an encore some hours hence."

"Ah, come on!" Al pointed a finger accusingly at the alien. "That's all a lot of phony junk. You can't talk to cats. They aren't intelligent creatures,anyhow."

"As you will," said the alien, his aura deepening to a disappointed chartreuse. "I didn't force the claim upon you. You asked and I merely told you the truth. Should I talk to this chair? Or the bed over there? They have minds, too, you know, and they can speak. Odd, you people have discovered that several times, the notion of the Greek ideal and that of the Japanese *kami* are both fairly close to it, but you don't seem to give it credence, Al."

"No, I sure don't. Look, I'm getting a little bit impatient with all of this jawing, and besides, there's a free dinner tonight up at the Unitarian Church, and another one at the Hare Krishna temple, and if I can get to the Unitarians in time I can chow down and then make it over to the Krishnas, too. They go in for a lot of chanting before they eat, you know."

"Yes," said the alien.

"So, my point is, fellow, if you have a proposition to make I wish you'd come to the point or else I have to ask you to leave."

"I'm sorry to take so long," the alien said. "I really enjoy getting to know a new species. And you humans are quite interesting, you know. Not too high on the intelligence scale, of course. Quite a few others on this planet are ahead of you there. But I must say that I have never —"

And the alien paused and leaned back, steepling its clusters of tentacles in an amazingly human gesture as he did so.

"— never come across a race so *droll* in some fifteen galaxies that I've visited. So — I might even say *bizarre* in your behavior."

Colors were running from the top of the alien's scaly blue head to the tips of its scaly blue feet, which Al Lambert noticed for the first time were naked and equipped with large, black, curved, pointed claws instead of toenails. Al ran his eye up the alien's leg from those claws and realized with a start that not only were the alien's feet unencumbered with raiment — *all* of the alien was naked. That must be why he'd fished in the briefcase-thing for the little gadget on the table, and why he'd worn the language machine behind his ear. Lack of pockets could be a dreadful nuisance.

"Okay, fine," Al urged the alien along. Lambert had, in all honesty, never given a great deal of thought to the perils of dealing with scaly blue beings from outer space, and in the rare moments when he *had* contemplated that contingency, he'd never anticipated the problem of dealing with one who talked around things so long that he might cost Al a free meal. Or even *two* free meals — on the same night!

"Listen, you clearly have some kind of offer to make. Will you make it so I can either take you up on it or tell you no and go chow down?"

The alien said, "Of course, of course. Very simply, I represent an organization that controls intergalactic rights to the portal you see before you." He leaned forward and with a cluster of writhing blue tentacles adjusted some small extrusions on the sides of the device resting on Al's all-purpose table. A light sprang on in the center of the device. It looked like an open square, a window or picture frame. The light was

a bright green, just below the level of intensity that would have made it impossible for Al to look at it for more than a few seconds at a time

Al stood up and leaned over the table, gazing into the brilliant light. He thought he could almost make out something on the other side of the square. It wasn't the other side of his room.

He walked around the table and looked at the illuminated square from the other side. Here the illumination was equally as bright, but of a different color, a sort of rosy violet for which, Al thought, there ought to be a name. Maroon? No. Purple? Mauve? Surely not. Magenta! Yes, that was it. A brilliant magenta light, also so brilliant that he could barely tolerate looking into it.

"You see?" the alien inquired. "I need merely turn on the portal, and anything that we pass through the opening is whisked away!"

He picked up a dried crumb of week-old lasagna that lay on the table and flipped it through the magenta side of the portal. In the blinking of an eye it was gone, quite without sound, flash, vibration, odor, or any other sign of its passing.

The alien picked up another scrap from the table, a bent paper clip that had at one time held a slim sheaf of papers together. He held it in the center of a group of tentacles and flipped it through the green side of the portal. Like the lasagna, it was gone.

Lambert sidled around the table until he was standing directly over the portal, looking down on it, his right eye on the green side, his left on the magenta. It was an odd sight — the table top was illuminated for a few square inches around the portal, one side each color. There was no sign of either the crumb of lasagna or the bent strip of copper wire.

"That little gadget, eh?"

"Quite so."

"Gone?"

"Gone."

"That isn't a miniature furnace or anything like that, is it? Your gadget, I mean?"

"Oh, no! Wouldn't think of such a thing. Instantaneous transportation of matter. Here to — there." The alien was sitting with his fingers steepled again, his feet crossed and resting on the edge of Al's table. For a moment Al considered asking the alien to remove his feet from the table, not that he was getting it dirty, really; not that there was anything there that would be harmed by a little more dirt, considering the condition in which Al kept his so-called furnished efficiency; but merely on the grounds that it would give him a psychological advantage to put the alien in a bad light and cast himself in the role of an authority figure.

But then he decided that the alien might not follow out the suggestion, and that would put Al in a weaker position than ever. Better not to risk it.

"Here to — where?" Al asked the alien.

"Anywhere you like. Any inhabited planet within fifteen galaxies. Or any uninhabited one, for that matter. Anywhere at all. Want to go to the back side of the moon? Walk the deserts of Mars? Explore beneath the cloud cover of Venus? See the rings of Saturn up close?"

"Nah." Al shook his head. "Those things are all spoiled. Used to be great. I used to read comic books about places like that. Secret cities on the moon. Ancient ruins and gaunt nomads plodding across red Martian dunes. Venusian swamps. Those were best of all. Steaming jungles. Endless monsoons. White traders soaking up local rum in spaceport saloons while froggies harvested the gubba-gubba weed. Those were the days!"

The alien asked Al why he used the past tense. That was one of the remarkable things about the alien's use of English — not only did he possess a vocabulary every bit as extensive as Lambert's, if a trifle less colorful — he was thoroughly conversant with technicalities of mood, voice, and tense. Things that sometimes puzzle even professional purveyors of prose and poetry. Amazing.

In response to the alien's question about his use of tense, Al Lambert explained that the explorations of NASA and its Soviet counterpart had stolen all of the glamour from the planets. We'd known all along that the front side of the moon was a fierce and sterile wasteland of mountains and craters and rocks. Now we knew that the back side was another wasteland of mountains and craters and rocks. We'd suspected all along that Mars would present a hostile environment for life, but now we knew that it was so hostile that there could be no nomads. Maybe once upon a time there had been, and maybe the planet would be explored someday and artifacts would be found, but no hypothetical potsherd lying buried beneath millions of years of sand could compete with a living Martian. And Venus — ah, Venus, that was the sharpest sting of all. No need even to contemplate Venus.

The alien's aura positively shimmered sympathy at Lambert. "But you see, there is no need to fret over the loss. The galaxy contains billions and billions and billions of stars, Al. And most of them have planets. And there are so many galaxies! You can find any kind of world you want, don't you see? It doesn't matter what your specifications are, short of actually violating the basic laws of nature. What if the odds are long? If you want a one-in-a-million planet, it exists. One in a hundred million One in a billion.

"Instantaneous transport," the alien repeated, tapping the upper framework of his portal. Somehow he reminded Al Lambert of a used car salesman proudly demonstrating a late-model sports car. Al felt a little suspicious.

"That may work for lasagna crumbs and bent paper clips, but how am I going to fit through there? I'm a lot bigger than a lasagna crumb or a paper clip!"

"But of course," the alien said. "Through the proximity field relativity principle, anything that passes through the portal is reduced to the dimensions of the portal as it passes through, and then restored to its normal size as it emerges on the other side.

"That, after all, is how I got here."

Al said *hmmm*

"Now, just where did you say you wished to go?" the alien asked.

Al didn't reply.

"Al-ghoul XXIII? NGC 6607? Beta Ceti?"

"Actually," Al ventured, "I really am kind of fond of the old Venus. I suppose there's something just a trifle decadent in my makeup that those images resonate with. If you know what I mean, of course."

"I do, I do," the alien said, his aura glowing with empathy.

"But Venus isn't like that at all," Al resumed. "Always seemed to me a cross between the South Seas and outer space, best parts of both, worst of neither."

The alien went to his briefcase again and pulled out a crackle-covered notebook. He started flipping pages.

Al leaned over and tried to look over the alien's shoulder, but the alien turned the book so Al couldn't see into it. "Sorry," he said, his aura glowing softly in a gray compounded of apology and helplessness, "it's a firm rule. Policy, you know. I'd let you look in the catalog if it were up to me. There's nothing secret about it. But the rules are the rules."

Al harrumphed and sat down.

"Ah," the alien said, his aura brightening up greatly, "here's just the thing for you. Rather far, don't think you have a formal designation for the place? Small pinkish star in a second-generation ellipsoid spiral nebula out in the general direction of, ah, Spica, eh? But much, much farther, of course."

The alien twiddled with the knobs and slides on the edges of the miniature window frame. Al tried to peer through the opening, first from the greenish side, then from the magenta. He could see plenty of color and what he thought might be shapes moving around, but everything was so vague, thanks to the dazzling brightness, that he couldn't be sure of anything he saw.

"How do I go?"

"Simplest thing in the world. In the world. Little joke, that." The alien's aura gave a display of yellow with red-orange polka dots when he told a joke. Roughly the equivalent of laughter, Al decided. "All you have to do is start through. Should be easy for you — just poke one of those things, fingers, into the frame and off you go."

Al reached forward. A movement behind the alien arrested his progress, however. He looked and saw that it was Dart the tomcat tiptoeing around — it's amazing how lightly even the bulkiest of toms can tiptoe when he really wants to — and for some reason that made Al Lambert ask a final question before he stuck his finger in the portal.

"What do I have to pay for this?"

A positive rainbow rippled down the alien's form, then reverberated back from his clawed feet to his scale-covered blue noggin. "There is no fee. My organization provides this service without charge to the user."

Al took a deep breath, held his nose with one thumb and forefinger, poised his other forefinger at the edge of the glowing portal, and lunged.

Something went *zap*! Al's hair stood on end as if he were in the middle of a zone of static electricity; he felt every nerve in his body tingle, every muscle spasm, his ears rang, his eyes bugged, his head swam, he smelled something that he tentatively identified as ozone, his taste buds went wild trying to label something that was sweet, sour, salty, and bitter all at once. The closest thing to the experience that he could recall was a special Bloody Mary that his girl friend had once ordered from a bartender she knew and that Al had tasted, expecting only a mild, tomatoey flavor.

And suddenly he found himself in a completely different place.

It was a dark room. A bar, in fact, from first impressions, lighted by flickering cressets and candles. Apparently the place was without electricity. It didn't have the feel of a Trader Vic's, where fortunes are expended to attain the atmosphere of a South Seas dive. It had more of the ambience of a real South Seas dive — but it wasn't exactly like that either.

The walls were made of some kind of rough, fibrous material. The floor was covered with mats of the same stuff. The bar itself seemed to be made of wood, but of no type Lambert could remember. He himself was sitting at a tiny, grimy table in the darkest corner of the largely empty room.

There were two or three men lounging at the bar, wearing a variety of stained and ragged khaki. Each looked more unkempt and unshaven than the next. They were drinking steadily and conversing in low voices. The only other sound came from outside — a steady drumbeat of gigantic raindrops pounding off the roof of the building, off the narrow wooden walkway outside, onto the dark, muddy ground beyond.

Lambert couldn't see far outside — it seemed to be daytime, but the sky was so heavily overcast, the sun so weak and so hidden, that visibility was lost in the rain after a few yards. Only an occasional streak of livid verdant lightning illuminated what lay beyond the muddy clearing: a jungle, dense, steaming, clotted with hungry vines and fat, fleshy leaves of unhealthy dark reds and yellows. Whenever the lightning struck, hideously bloodcurdling screams rose from the jungle, only to be cut off a few seconds later by the thunderous reverberating report that followed each lightning bolt.

Lambert slouched farther into the shadows, prepared to observe and orient himself before he took any overt action. Caution was the byword.

One of the men at the bar had obviously taken offense at something said by another. He slammed down his glass of wicked-colored hooch and shouted at his companion. "I don't care what them damned bleeding hearts has to say. These Veenies is just a pack of animals. Reptiles. Giant trained frogs. You can teach 'em to tend bar and to harvest the *syzzyl* weed for us and that's all they're good for, and killing one of 'em doesn't amount to anything!"

"I'm not so certain of that," his companion was saying in reply. "They seem to be quite intelligent. They have a culture of their own, primitive to be sure. But they have gods and legends and even a few crude sculptures. That's why the museum sent me here, of course, to gather enough Veenie artifacts for a display."

"Garbage!" the first man roared back. "They're just a bunch of toads, and they even know it themselves. Here, I'll prove it to you, you lousy toad-lover!"

He pounded a huge, dirty fist on the wooden bar. "Hey! Fytzl! Get the hell over here before I roast your legs for dinner!"

The bartender dropped a towel and glass he'd been holding and scuttled over to face the two men. For the first time, Al Lambert was able to see the bartender clearly. He had a curiously flat, broad head with bulging eyes, no visible nose, and a mouth that would have split his face from ear to ear when he opened it if he'd had any ears.

"Yzz, zzyr," the creature croaked at the human. When he opened his mouth, Al could see that he had an incredibly long red tongue hinged at the front of his upper jaw.

"Tell this bleeding heart that you're just a bunch of frogs an' toads, Veenie, before I open up your liver with my shiv!"

The bartender started to shake. He put his hands on the bar to steady himself and Al could see that the fingers were long and thin and connected with a membranous webbing. Fytzl's skin was a slimy-looking olive green mottled with almost black spots the size of small frisbees.

"Yzz, zzyr, bwnnna," the bartender croaked. "Jzzt beazztz, thztz all Veeneez arrr. Beaztz, towdzz, yzz zzyrz!" He ducked his head and scuttled away again.

"You see?" the first man exclaimed triumphantly, "just what I told you! They even admit it!"

"Well, I'm not totally convinced even so," the second man replied. "But look," he said, pointing to the open door of the bar, "here comes a Veenie work squad back from the jungle."

Lambert's eyes followed those of the two men. By a flash of lurid lightning he could see a row of the froglike creatures emerging from the leaves and vines of the noisome growth. They were being battered by the unrelenting downpour, and their backs were bent beneath titanic loads of slimily dripping leaves and fronds. Open wounds and hideous bruises marked them one and all.

A man in a bright yellow slicker and hood was herding the Veenies, coiled whip in one hand, elaborate ray pistol in the other. There was something strangely, hauntingly familiar in the man's tough appearance, his slightly off-center gait.

Something came to galvanized life within Al Lambert. It was the Veenies' own problem, there was nothing he could do about it, and besides, maybe the first man at the bar was right anyhow, and the froglike creatures were mere animals. Still, even in the selfish breast of Al Lambert, something stirred and bubbled and sprang into action.

He pushed the table angrily away from himself and ignored the crash and the clatter with which it rolled across the barroom floor. Al was already moving across the room and out the open door, across the wooden walk and onto the mud outside. He felt the heavy raindrops begin to smash onto his head and shoulders but it bothered him remarkably little, as if he had been born to this steaming, semiamphibious milieu.

Gathering all of his energy and all of his anger, he sprang across the muddy clearing and confronted the man herding the hapless Veenies. They stood face to face for a few seconds. Al looked into the eye of the slicker-garbed stranger, a single, mean, sly, yellow eye that seemed to bore into Al's brain. The man's nose was curved and showed an ugly indentation where it had once been broken. A wicked scar curved from a half-missing ear across one cheek, tugging the man's mouth and, in fact, his whole face into a perpetual nasty sneer.

"Well, what do you want? Be quick about it!" the man snarled.

"Yyu mzzt ztopp enzzlavvng dzze pur Vveeneez!" Lambert heard himself croak. ■

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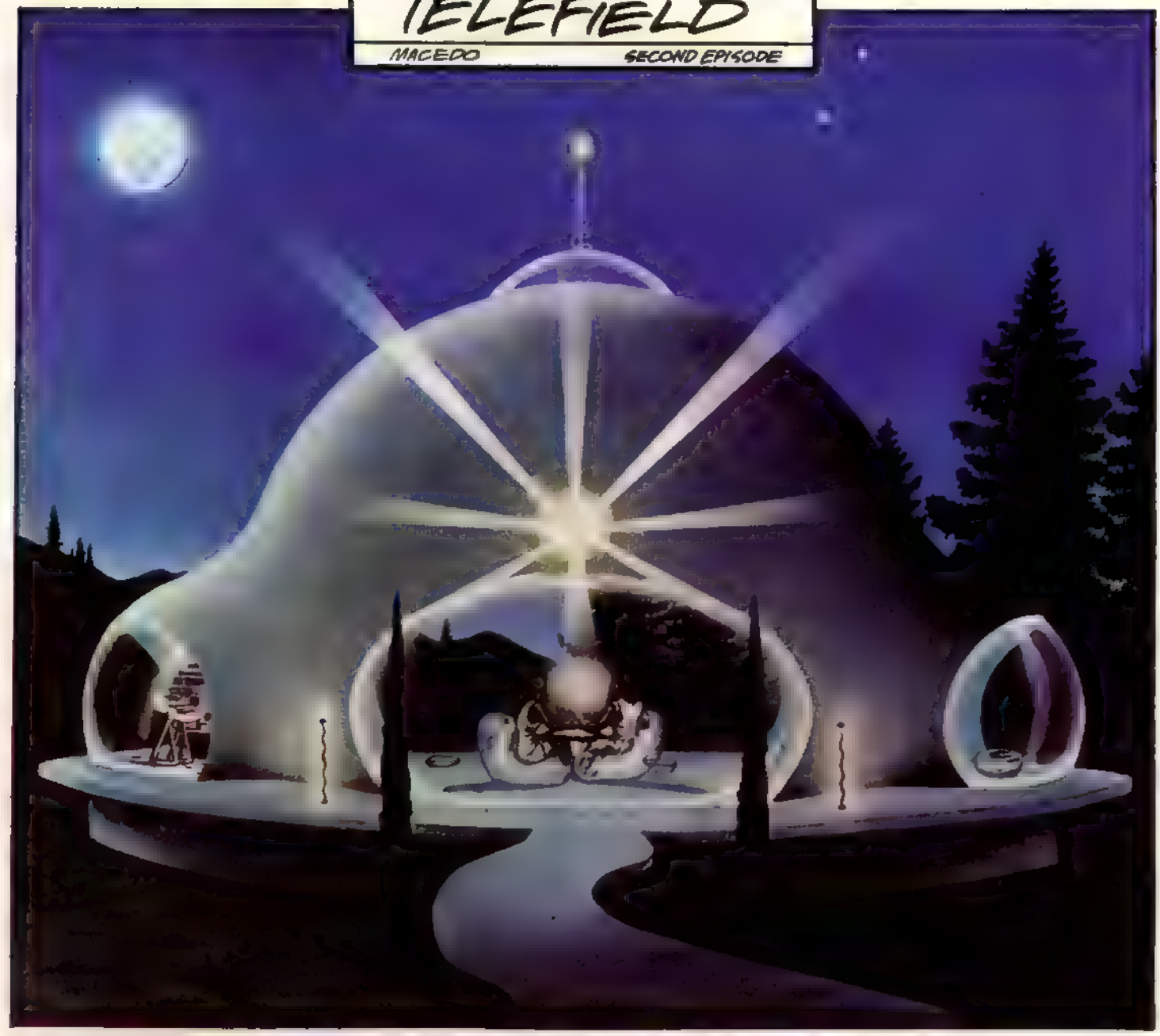

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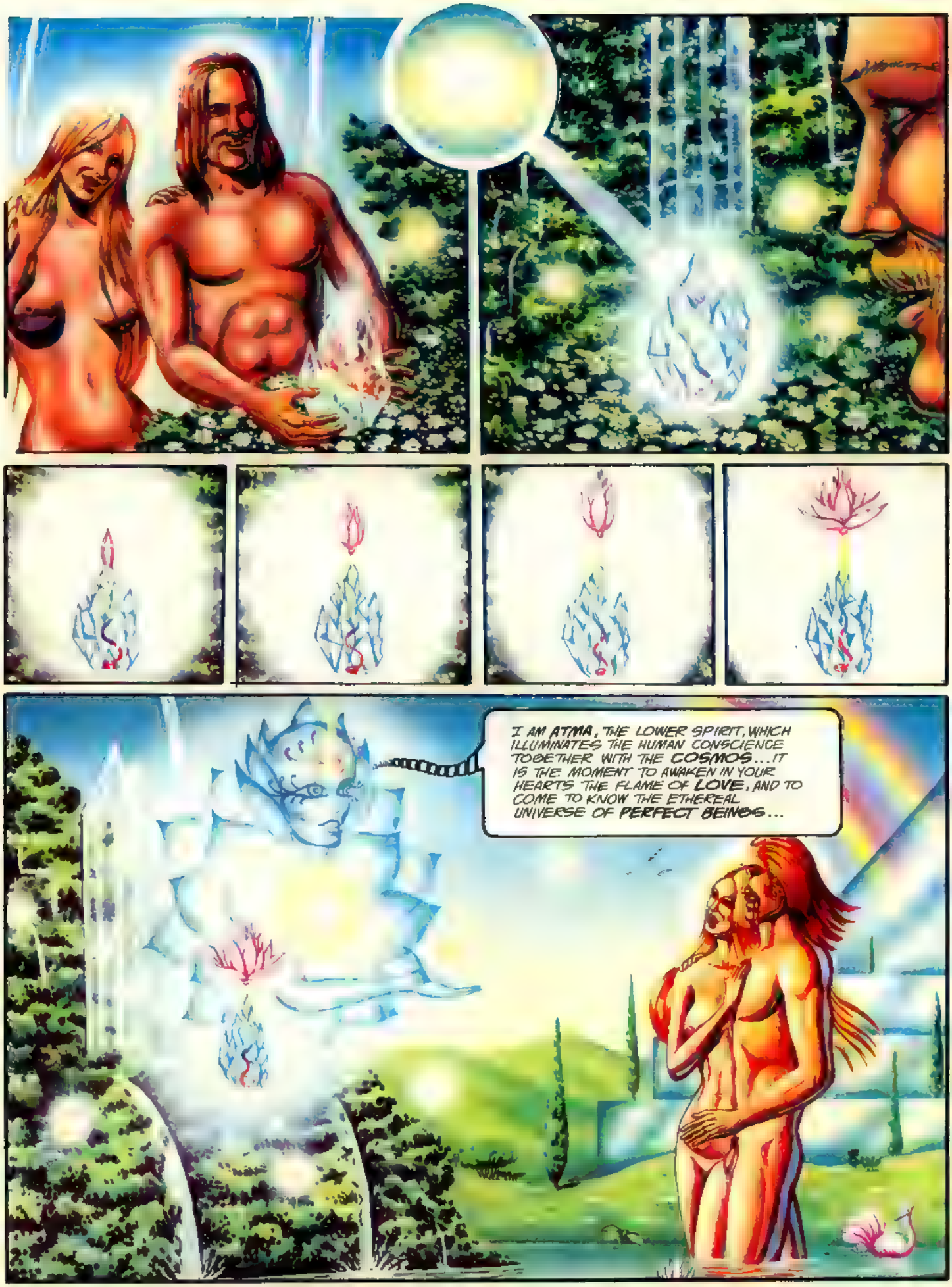
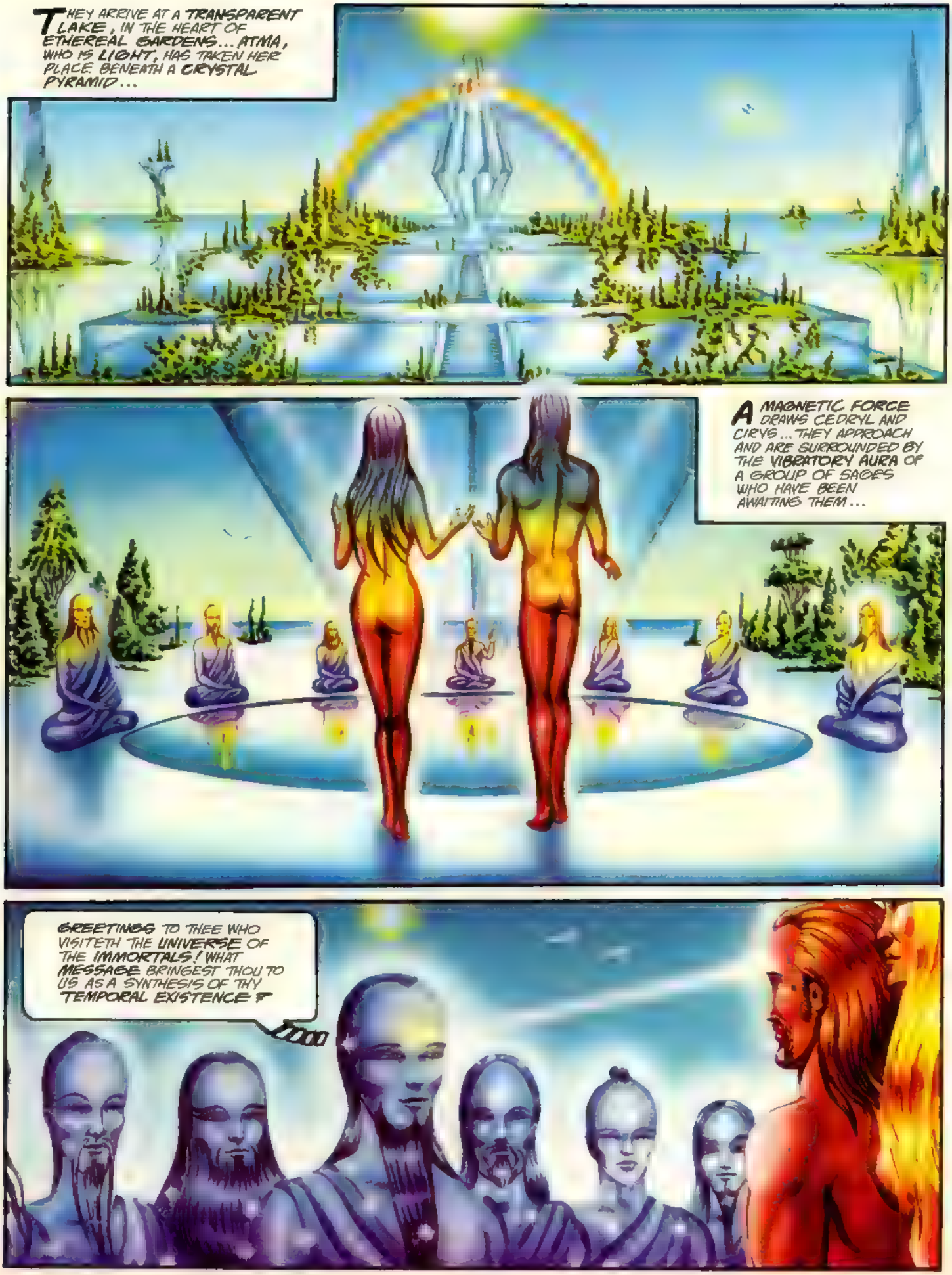

I AM ATMA, THE LOWER SPIRIT, WHICH ILLUMINATES THE HUMAN CONSCIENCE TOGETHER WITH THE COSMOS... IT IS THE MOMENT TO AWAKEN IN YOUR HEARTS THE FLAME OF LOVE, AND TO COME TO KNOW THE ETHEREAL UNIVERSE OF PERFECT BEINGS...

OPEN YOURSELVES TO MY ENERGY! COMPLETE WITH ME THE CIRCUITS BETWEEN THE STRENGTH OF FIRE AND ENLIGHTENED CONSCIOUSNESS! YOU HAVE NEURO-PSYCHIC CENTERS AS ENERGY SOURCES AT THE BASE OF YOUR SPINE AND IN YOUR HEAD! AWAKEN THEM!
AS FOR ME, I WILL TAKE MY ORIGINAL FORM AGAIN. PURE LIGHT! COME! AWAKEN! ALLOW THE VIBRATORY LEVEL OF YOUR BODY TO GROW AND CARRY YOU INTO THE BEYOND! FOLLOW ME! BECOME BEINGS OF LIGHT AND FLY!

THE ETHEREAL BODIES OF CEDRYL AND CIRYS FLOAT ACROSS THE IMMENSITY OF SPACE, GUIDED TOWARD THE EAST BY ATMA, AND NOW BECOME LIGHT.
RADIATING IN THE TRANSPARENT SKY, THE FIGURE OF A GREAT, ETERNAL ARCHETYPE LIGHTS THEIR WAY...
CROSSING AN ATMOSPHERE VIBRATING WITH CELESTIAL MUSIC AND SUBTLE SCENTS OF JASMINE FLOWERS...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A MAGNETIC FORCE DRAWS CEDRYL AND CIRYS... THEY APPROACH AND ARE SURROUNDED BY THE VIBRATORY AURA OF A GROUP OF SAGES WHO HAVE BEEN AWAITING THEM...
GREETINGS TO THEE WHO VISITETH THE UNIVERSE OF THE IMMORTALS! WHAT MESSAGE BRINGEST THOU TO US AS A SYNTHESIS OF THY TEMPORAL EXISTENCE?

THOU HATH PASSED THROUGH THE FIRST DOOR, TRAVELERS IN TIME! THIS PRECIOUS FLOWER, CREATED BY THY PSYCHONIC ENERGY, SHALL BE PLANTED IN OUR ETHEREAL GARDENS!
THY PURPOSE IS KNOWN TO US -- THE SUPERHUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE UNION BETWEEN EARTH AND COSMOS - NOW THOU HAST ARRIVED AT THE GATES OF IMMORTALITY, THOU MUST GO FORWARD IF THOU WOULDST BECOME MASTERS OF ENERGY! GO THEN, AND ASCEND THE STAIRS WHICH WILL LEAD YOU TO THE GREAT ARCHETYPES!
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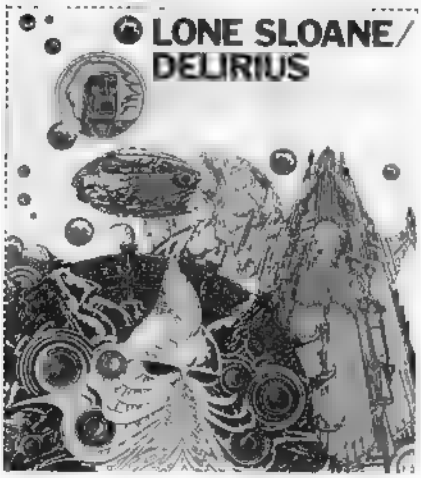

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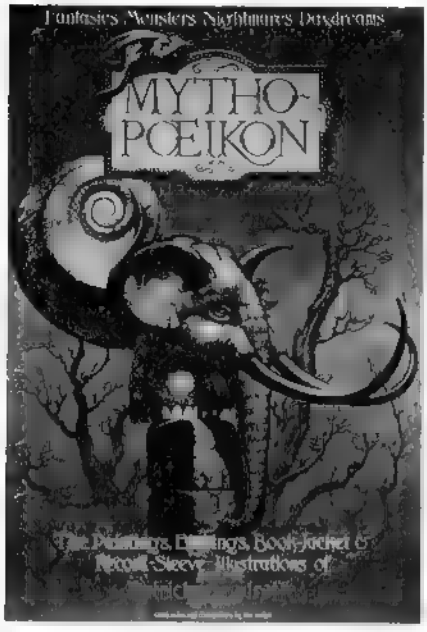

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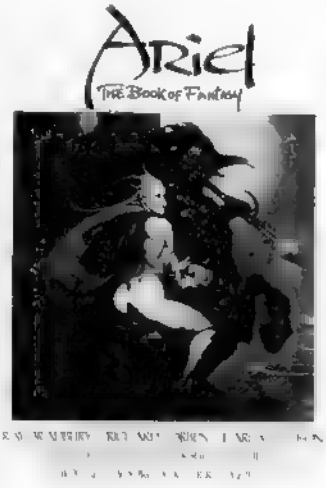

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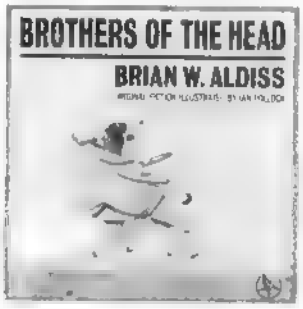

9109. BROTHERS OF THE DEAD by Brian Aldiss. Illustrations by Ian Pollock Brian Aldiss's tale of two brothers, joined at birth from breastbone to hip—their rise to fame in the frenzied world of rock their hatred for one another, their sexual involvements, and the malignant power that led to their grotesque end The story is told by the rock promoter who exploited them, by Zak Bedderwick, who trained them with a stun gun, by Laura Ashley, the r lover, and by the twins' sister, who ties together their bizarre story 10¼" x 10½" Softbound

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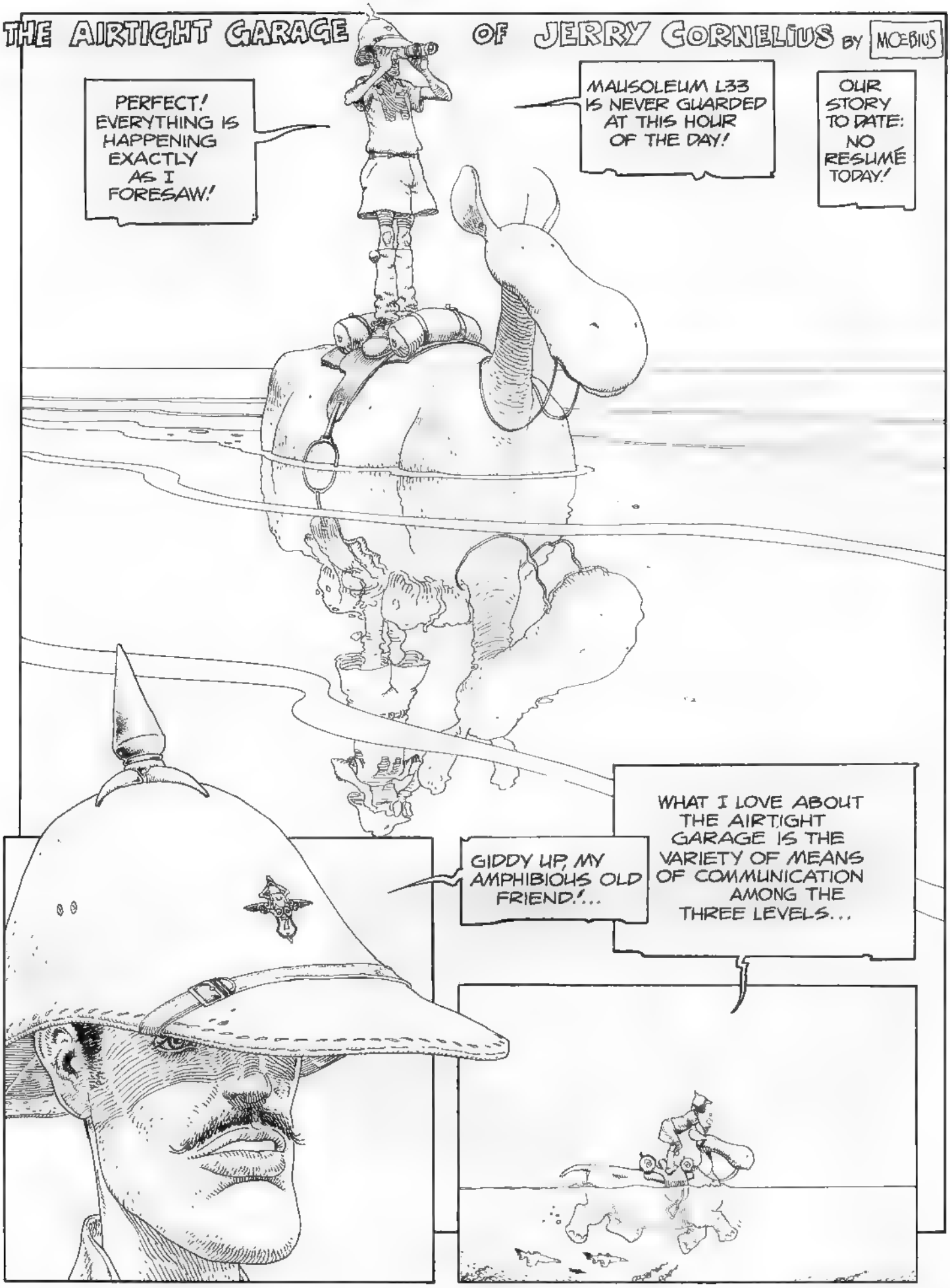
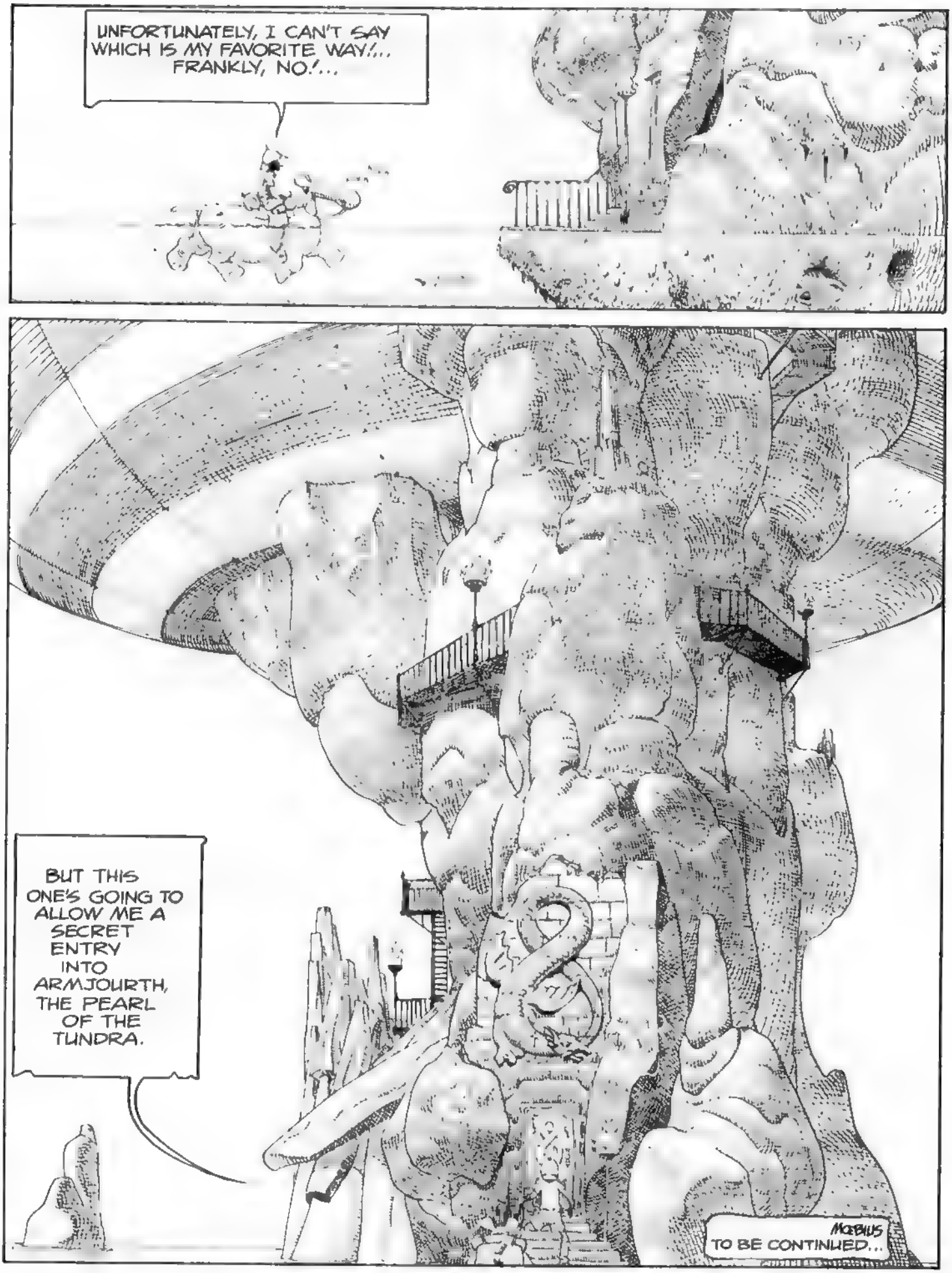

THE AIRTIGHT GARAGE OF JERRY CORNELIUS BY MŒBIUS
PERFECT! EVERYTHING IS HAPPENING EXACTLY AS I FORESAW!
MAUSOLEUM L33 IS NEVER GUARDED AT THIS HOUR OF THE DAY!
OUR STORY TO DATE: NO RESUMÉ TODAY!
GIDDY UP, MY AMPHIBIOUS OLD FRIEND!...
WHAT I LOVE ABOUT THE AIRTIGHT GARAGE IS THE VARIETY OF MEANS OF COMMUNICATION AMONG THE THREE LEVELS...


UNFORTUNATELY, I CAN'T SAY WHICH IS MY FAVORITE WAY!... FRANKLY, NO!...
BUT THIS ONE'S GOING TO ALLOW ME A SECRET ENTRY INTO ARMJOURTH, THE PEARL OF THE TUNDRA.
MŒBIUS
TO BE CONTINUED...

Continued from page 1

tainly a little more mature, than this repetitious outpouring of high school frosh bullshit.

Derek K. Long
Teaneck, N.J.

Hang in there, Derek. We have some college frosh bullshit coming soon. In fact, publishing this letter of yours is a step in that direction. — Eds.

Dear Maniacs:

It figures that a lunatic magazine like *Heavy Metal* would be edited by lunatics. Sean Kelly and Valerie Marchant are crazier than Gilles de Rais and Lucretia Borgia. Most of the art in *HM* is great; too bad the stories suck. Ellison's "How's the Night Life on Cissalda?" could have been the star feature in *Weird Sex Confessions of a Demented Pervert*, or even *Hustler*. Like to meet Nicol let

Denny Oaley
Chi-town, Ill

Funny, Harlan always speaks so well of you, Denny. – Eds.

To the Editors:

Walking slowly towards the door, I am conscious of nothing but the need to know what lies beyond and in. I turn the handle and throw the door open. Death faces me in the most physical sense . . . and I realize as I turn that I'm at the gates of hell . . . the fire engulfs me, and I burn. *Heavy Metal is* better than being stoned.

Lawrence Pugh
Longview, Washington

Well, anyway, it beats that angel dust stuff, huh, Larry? –Eds.

COLLECTOR'S ITEMS

HM #1/APRIL, 1977: With Space Punks, the first chapters of Corben's Den and Bode's Sunpot, an excerpt from the best-selling fantasy novel *The Sword of Shannara*, Harzak, and more. $4 00

HM #2/MAY, 1977: Introducing Roger, the paranoid puppet, Virgo, the cosmic maiden, Russian astronauts, Conquering Armies, the ultimate rock festival, while Harzak, Sunpot, and Den continue ($4 00)

HM #3/JUNE, 1977: Features *Night Images*, poetry by Conan's creator, Robert E. Howard, with illustrations by Corben; Macedo's Rockblitz, the highly praised Shells, the first chapter of Davis's World Apart, more Den, Sunpot, and Harzak. ($3 00)

HM #4/JULY, 1977: Is a must for Moebius fans, with 12 pages of Harzak and his s/f spy saga, The Long Tomorrow, also the end of Sunpot, further adventures of Den, the psychic Nep Simo, and the horrible Gold Queen ($3 00)

HM #5/AUGUST, 1977: In which the saga of Polonius begins, The Long Tomorrow concludes, World Apart and Den continue, all amidst talking plants, samurai, puppets, sex, and violence ($3 00)

HM #6/SEPTEMBER, 1977: Galactic aztecs, cosmic cowboys, hysterical shrubbery, chemically-induced sanity, a Moebius space opera, more World Apart, Den, and Polonius, plus a Roger Zelazny short story. ($3 00)

HM #7/ OCTOBER, 1977: Packed with knights, ladies, jet pilots; insanity, reincarnation, and other harmless pastimes; 10 pages of color Moebius; the Airtight Garage, Den and Polonius *redux;* and fiction by Theodore Sturgeon. ($3 00)

HM #8/NOVEMBER, 1977: With nine color pages by Moebius and Rimbaud, the conclusions of both Polonius and World Apart, ex-pugs, intellectual molusks, birth and death stars, and a great new Harlan Ellison story — the heaviest *Heavy Metal* yet! ($2 00)

HM #9/ DECEMBER, 1977: This time, went up to 104 pages to bring you the complete saga of Druillet's anti-hero, Vuzz, a chapter from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and Fortune's Fool by Chaykin and Wein, in addition to full color contributions from regulars Corben, Macedo, Claveloux, and Moebius. ($2 00)

HM #10/JANUARY, 1978: We got Morrow to illustrate Zelazny, we got Lob and Pichard to update Ulysses, we got Meehan to do a *Heavy Metal* calendar girl, we concluded Conquering Armies, and continued Den. Of course, you *knew* about the Incas, fog lights, and the time warp ($2 00)

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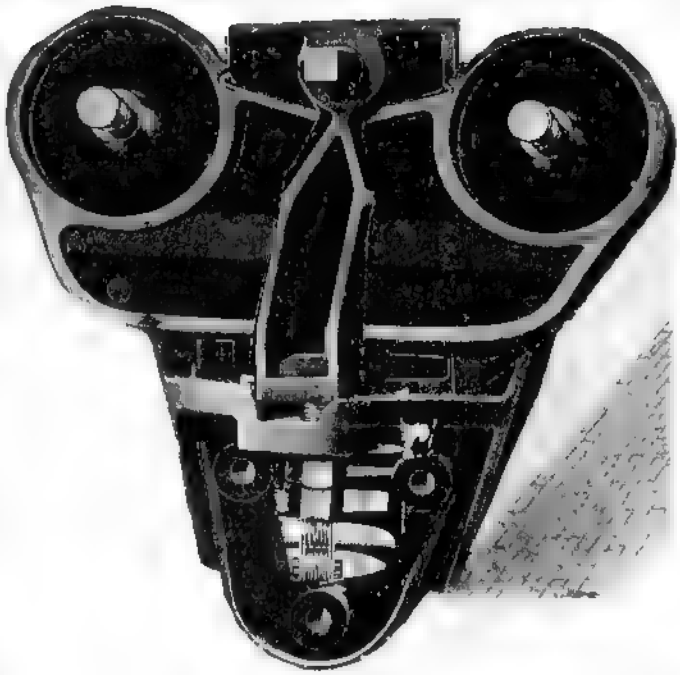
AGE OF AGES

by Akbar del Piombo Collages: Rubington



The Ode to Progress Expo catalog reveals the spectacular evolution of the robot. This mechanical monster of the first generation is an extinct curiosity, now upstaged by sophisticated biodynamic products so refined that they are in great demand as real fun people

The catalog,which exhibits all their talents,is a worldwide success. This triumph of western technology penetrates to the most backward regions, winning admirers and enthusiasts everywhere with its promise of a rosy future. . . .

There are types for every taste and purpose. This Don Juan, or "Latin lover," injects a macho touch to artificial insemination, delivers romantic spiel in several languages, boasts hand-tooled parts and no side effects after use.

The exciting "Package Deal Orgy" (also called "Sex-Pak") contains Unisex model 1984. Ideal traveler's companion, adaptable for all sizes. Interchangeable parts provide fit partner for any persuasion.

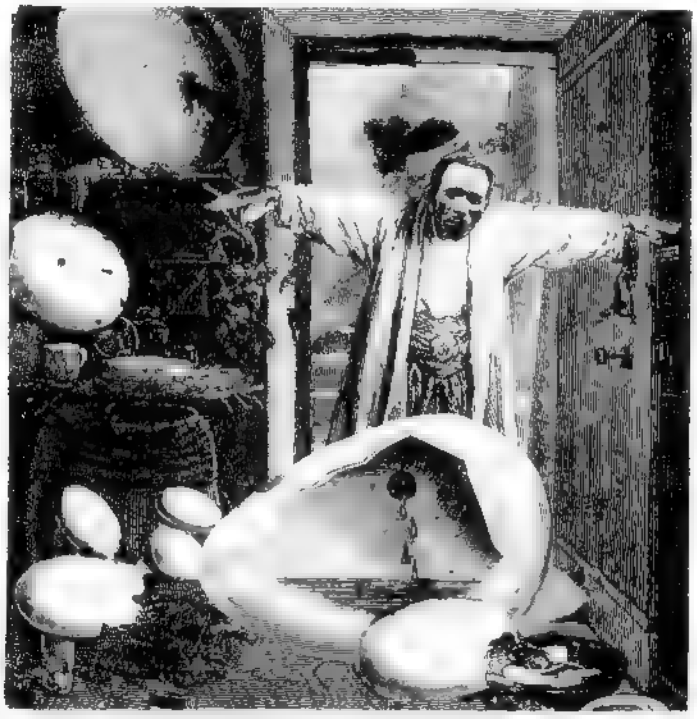
In the general depollution campaign, hard core porn is finished. In its place comes a fascination with the enigmatic fascination of Gothic perversity. for this, the "proxies" are ideal, the ultimate in fantasizers . .

Below "Simple Simon" model — a girl's best friend!

Generation gap is finally bridged Dirty old men are outnumbered and outclassed by their former prey.

Absolutely every taste was provided for, including those whose preferences went to other species. . .

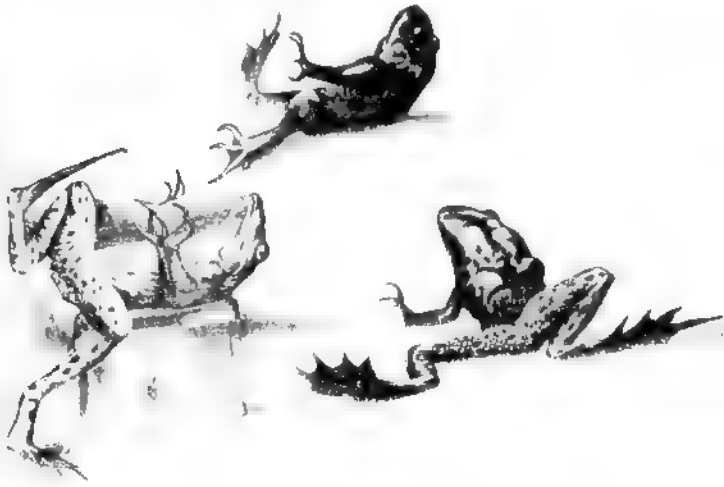
The wizards of genetic alteration were busy creating combines that produced new forms of life never before seen.

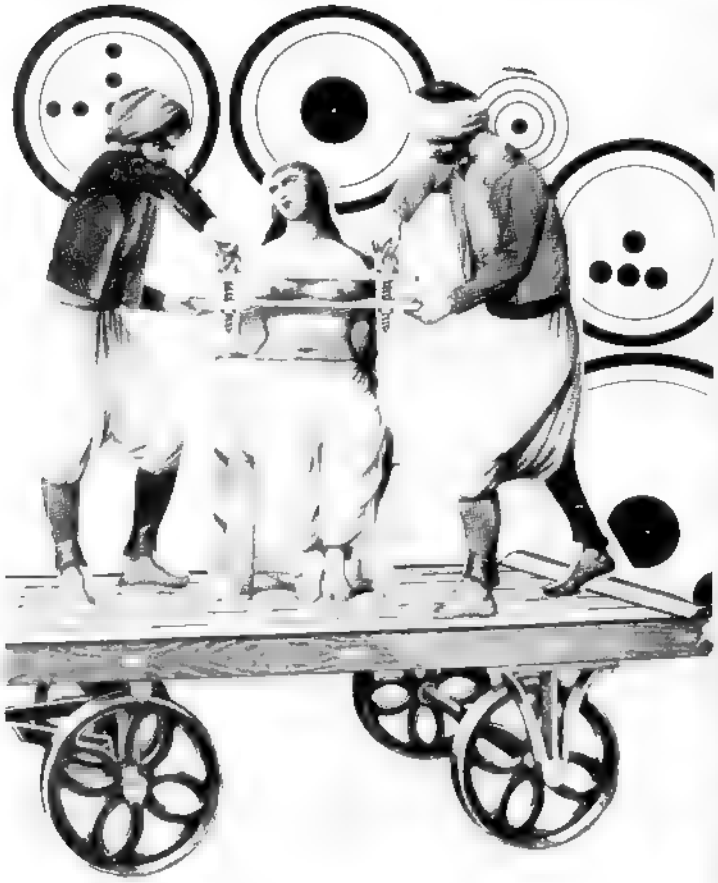


Freud destroyed. (Or, "so much for penis envy!") Casualties in the war between the sexes now exhibit unprecedented psychiatric damage, as in the case of the client whose sexist dreams enraged the analyst-person.

So much for fun and games . . .

Not only that . . . the secret to the joy of living was extracted from the frog after long years of intensive study and reduced to a workable formula for the new creations. (Lab photos of *Frogus americanus* exhibiting undiluted ecstasy approaching orgasm.)

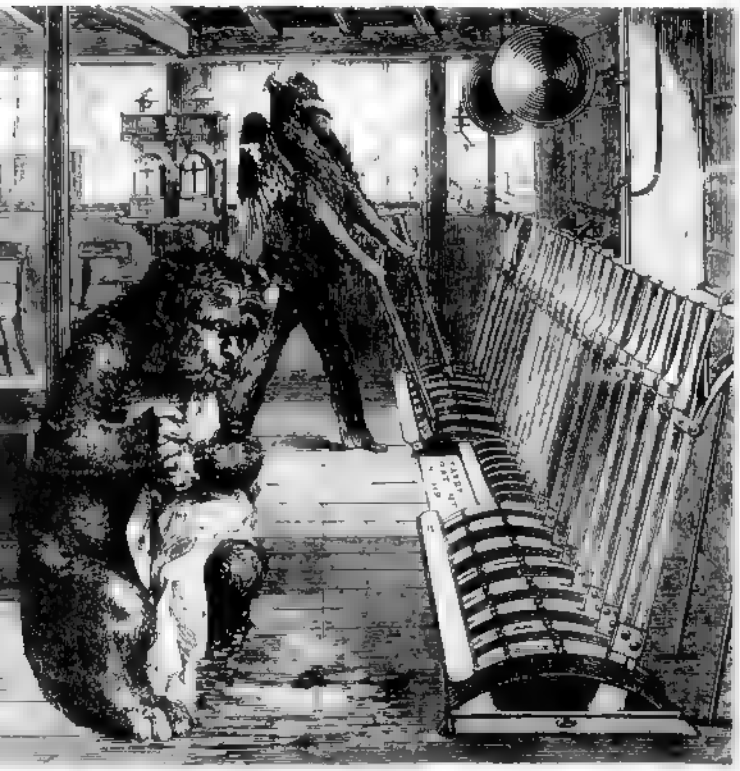




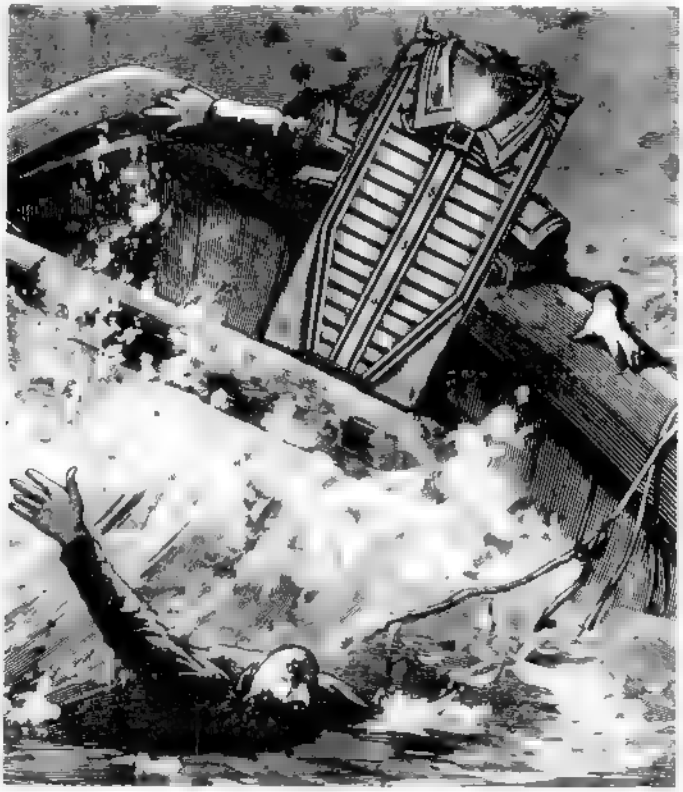
The vogue for the "proxies" was stimulated by old-style sideshows that produced horror shows that beat the movies in realism. *Whip and Lash* clubs sprang up with acts that "went the limit."

However, some combines failed to work out properly producing peculiar beings that no one wanted. . . .

When rumors spread of an automated factory being taken over by demons, few believed it. Most were convinced it was a hoax employing these weird "combo-creatures.". . .



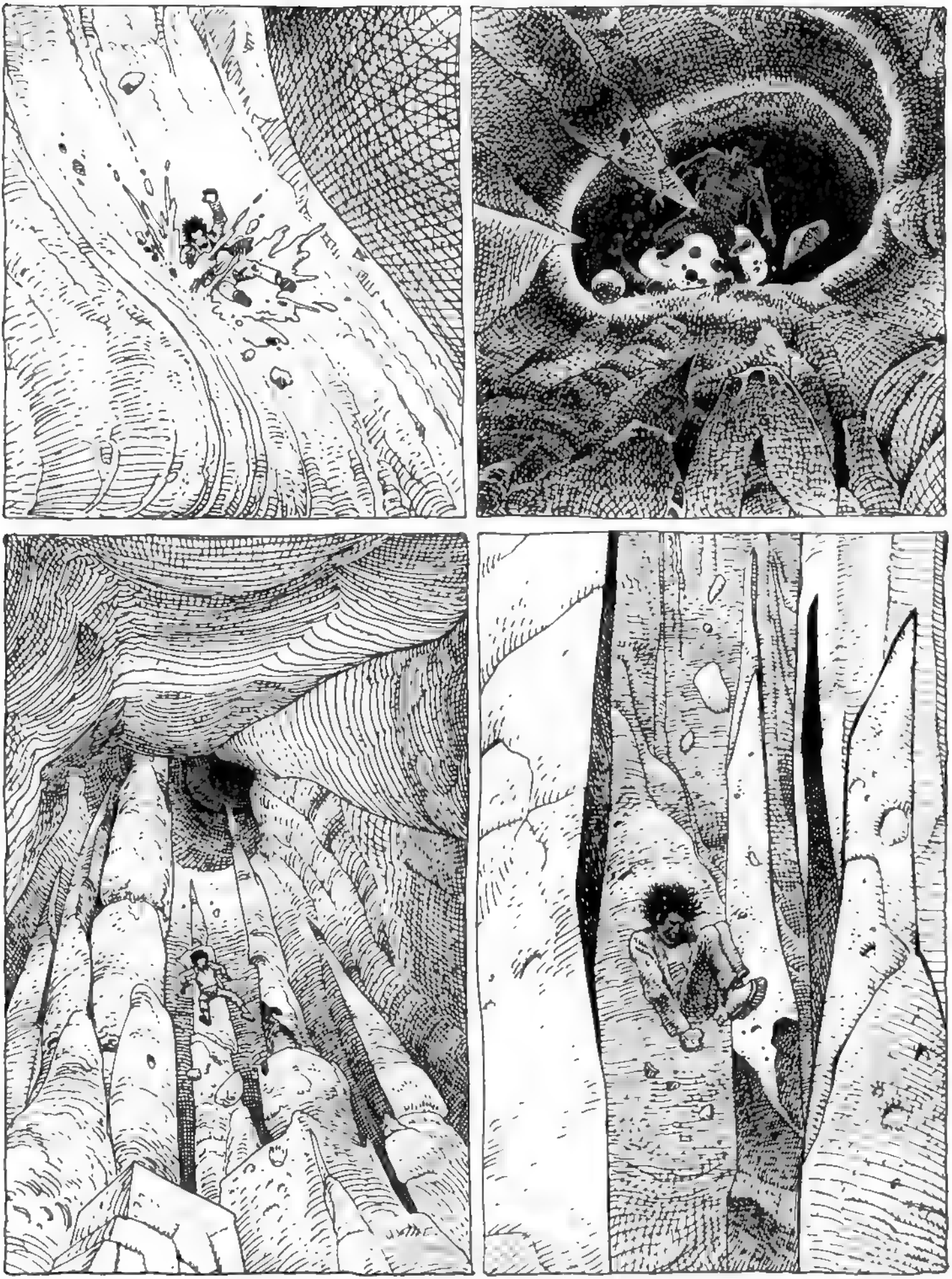
People were not so sure in the case of an automatic pilot that suffered a breakdown and caused a terrible disaster at sea. Experts were baffled upon discovering its alpha waves had been hexed, pointing to an occult intrusion in the mechanism.

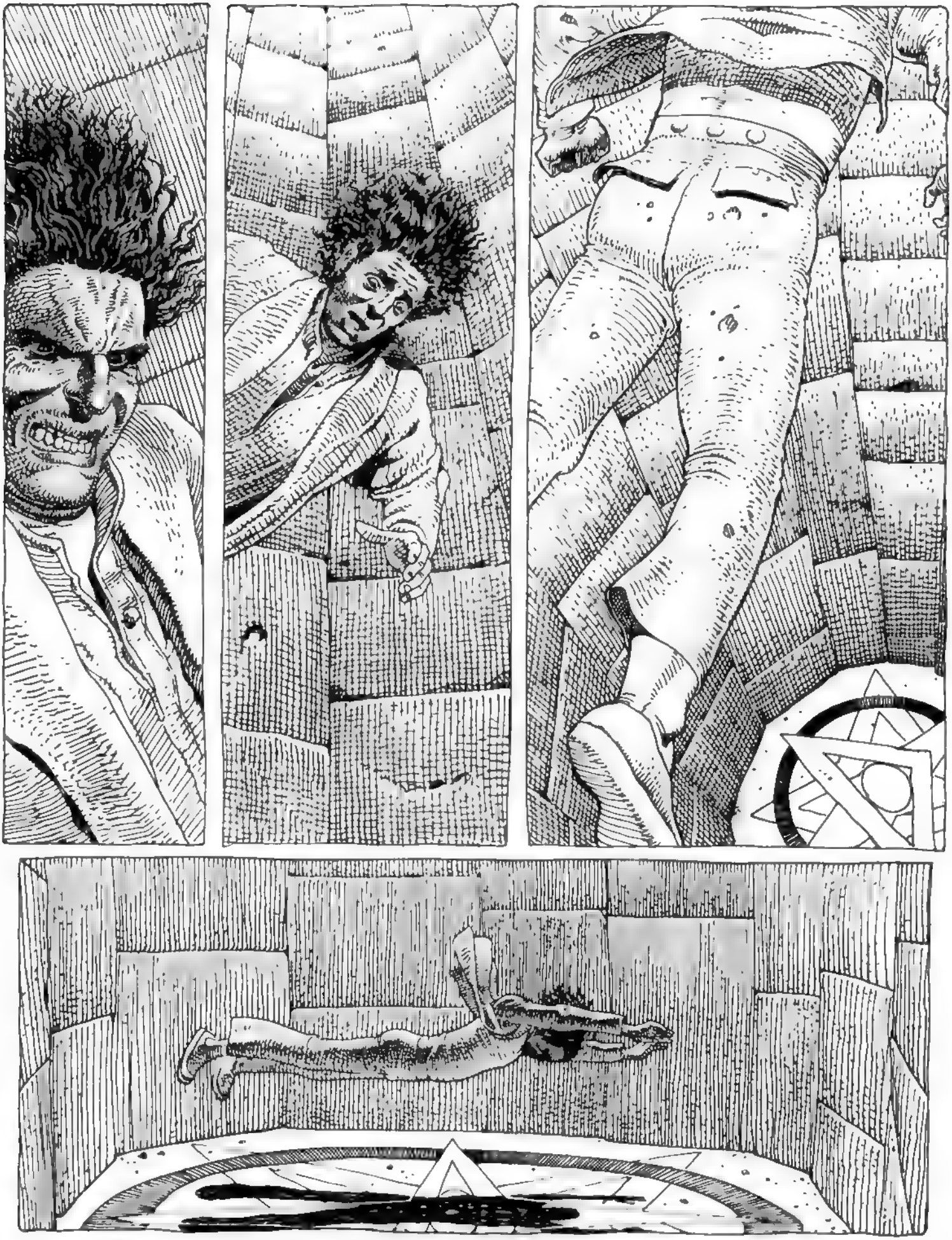


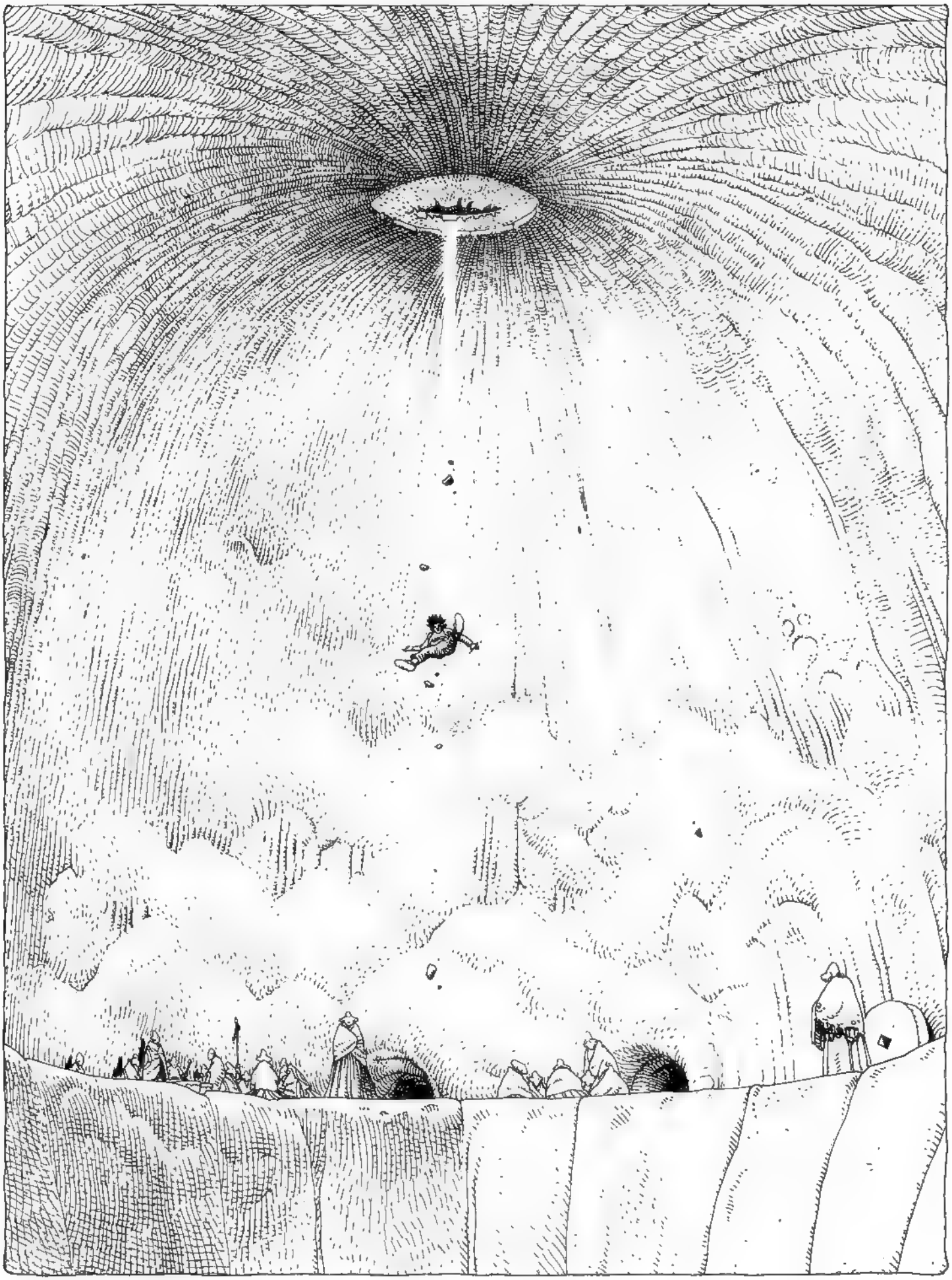
The End

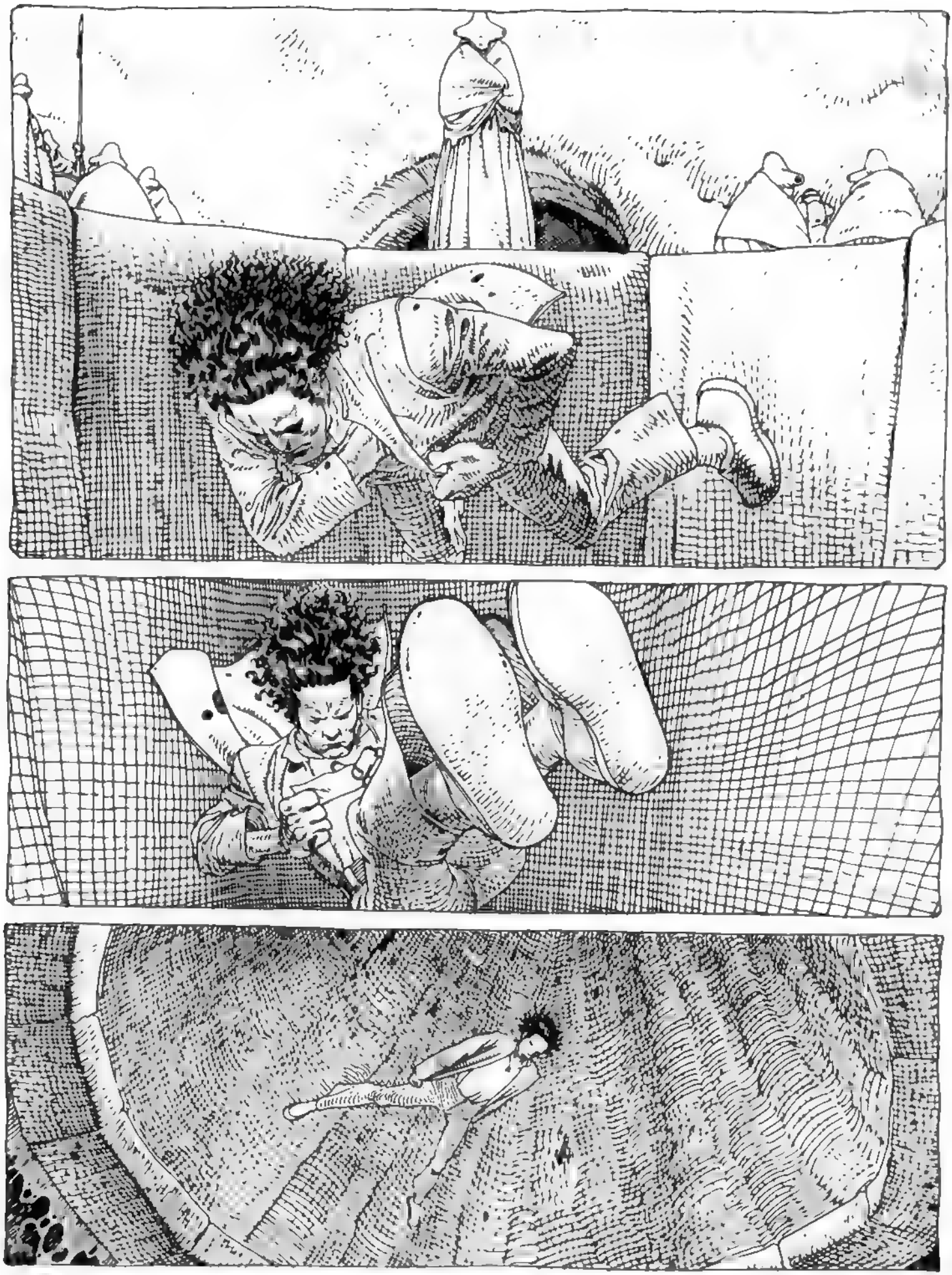
FREE · FALL

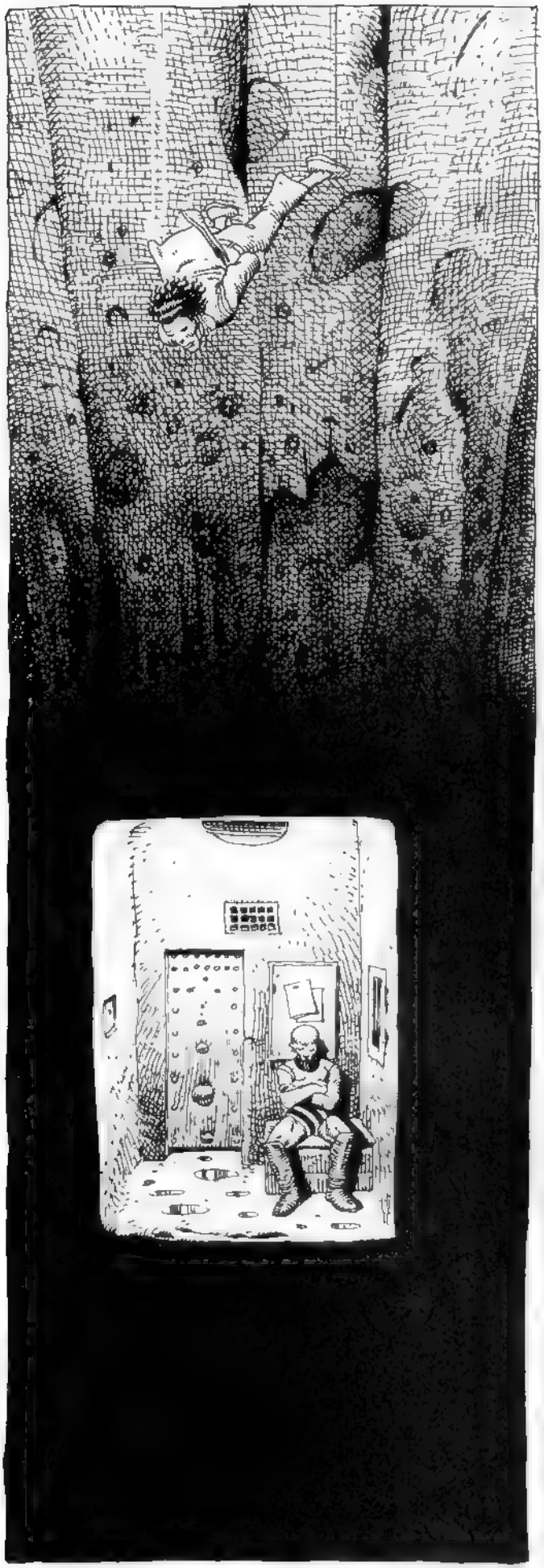
BY MOEBIUS

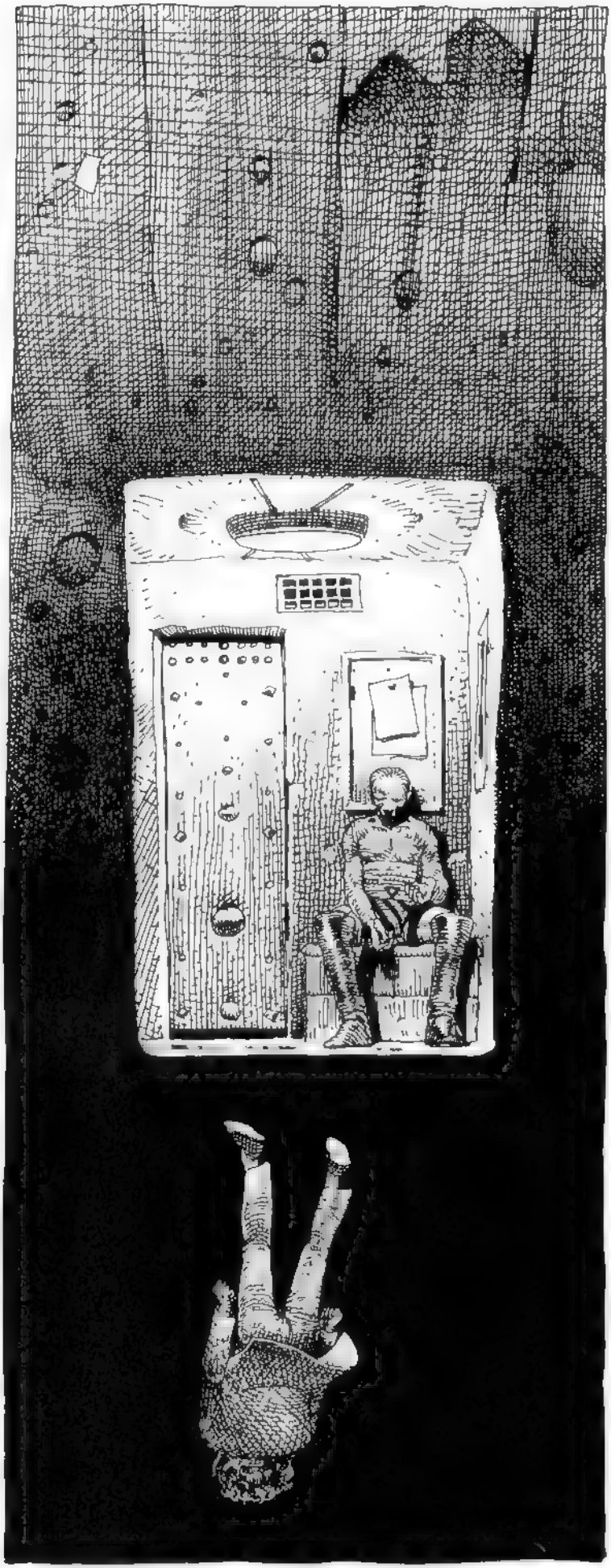


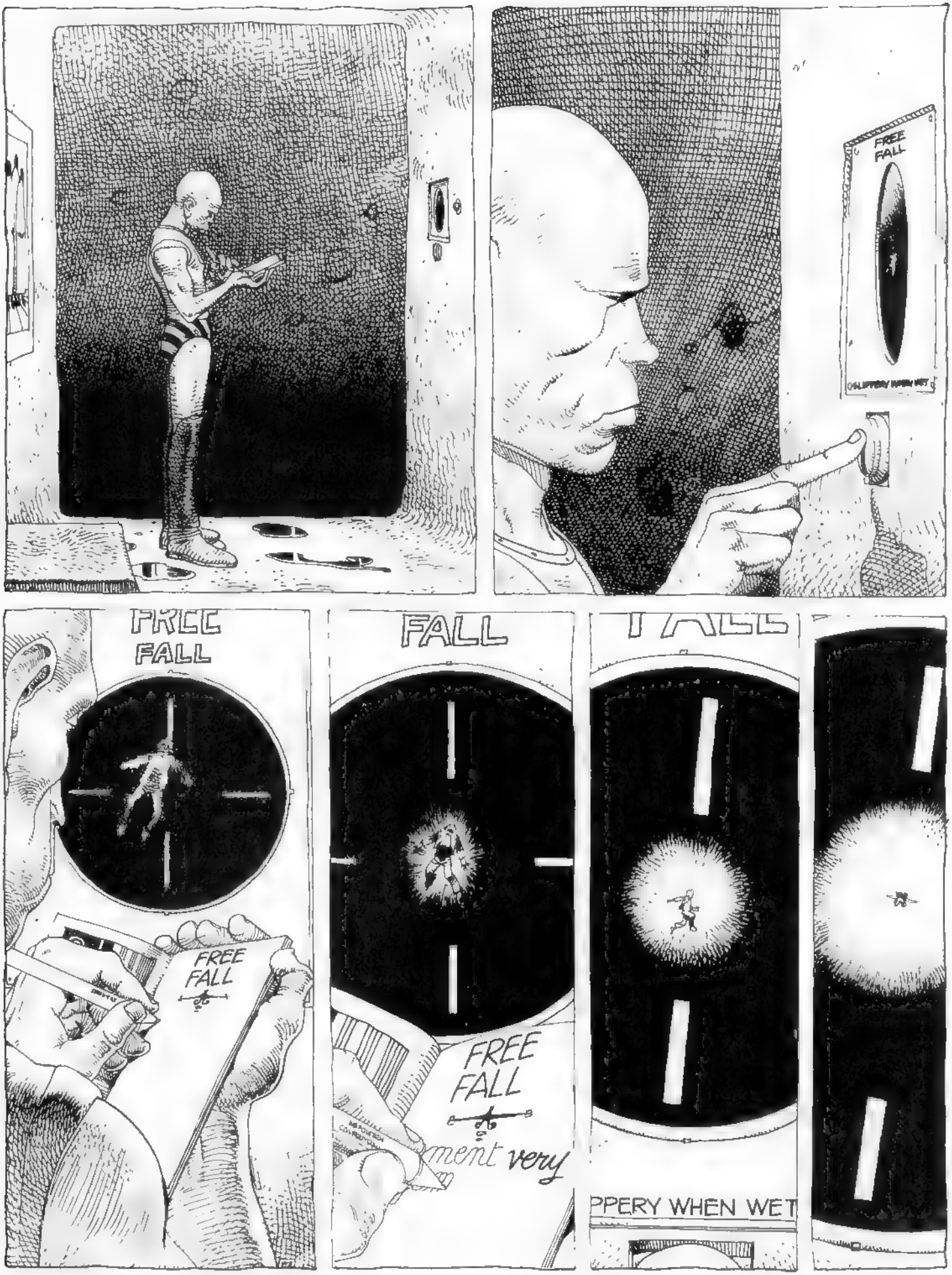








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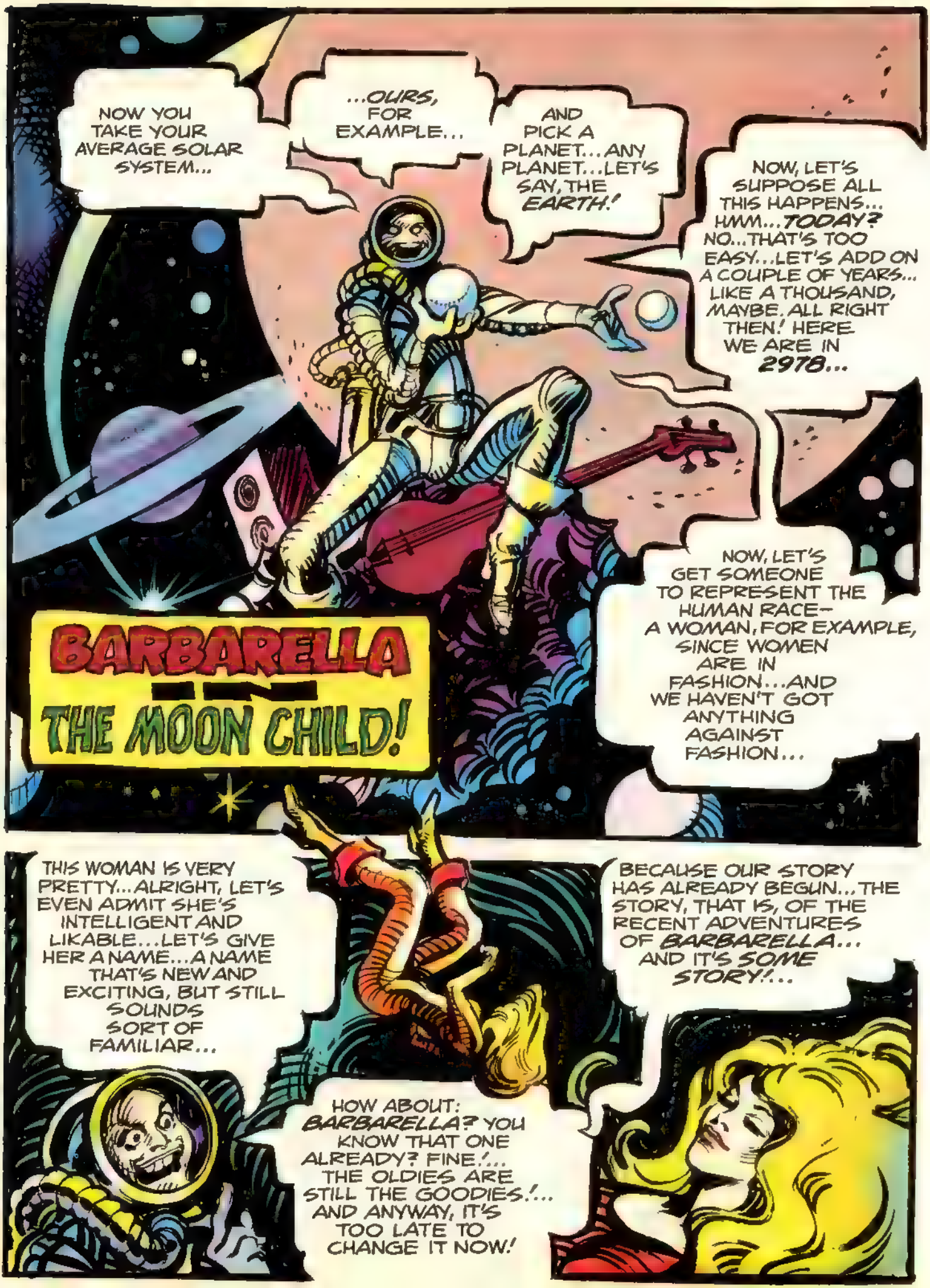
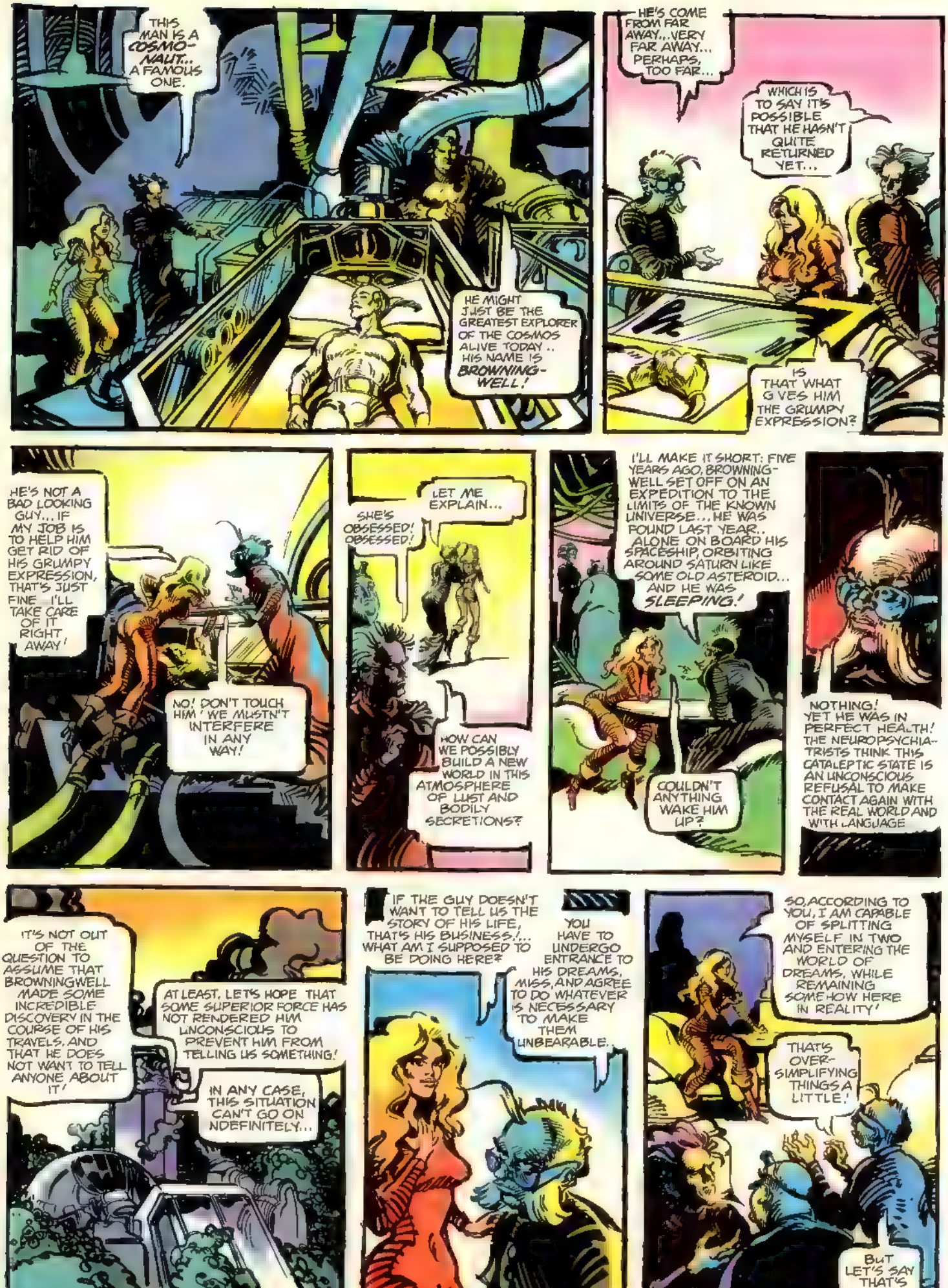
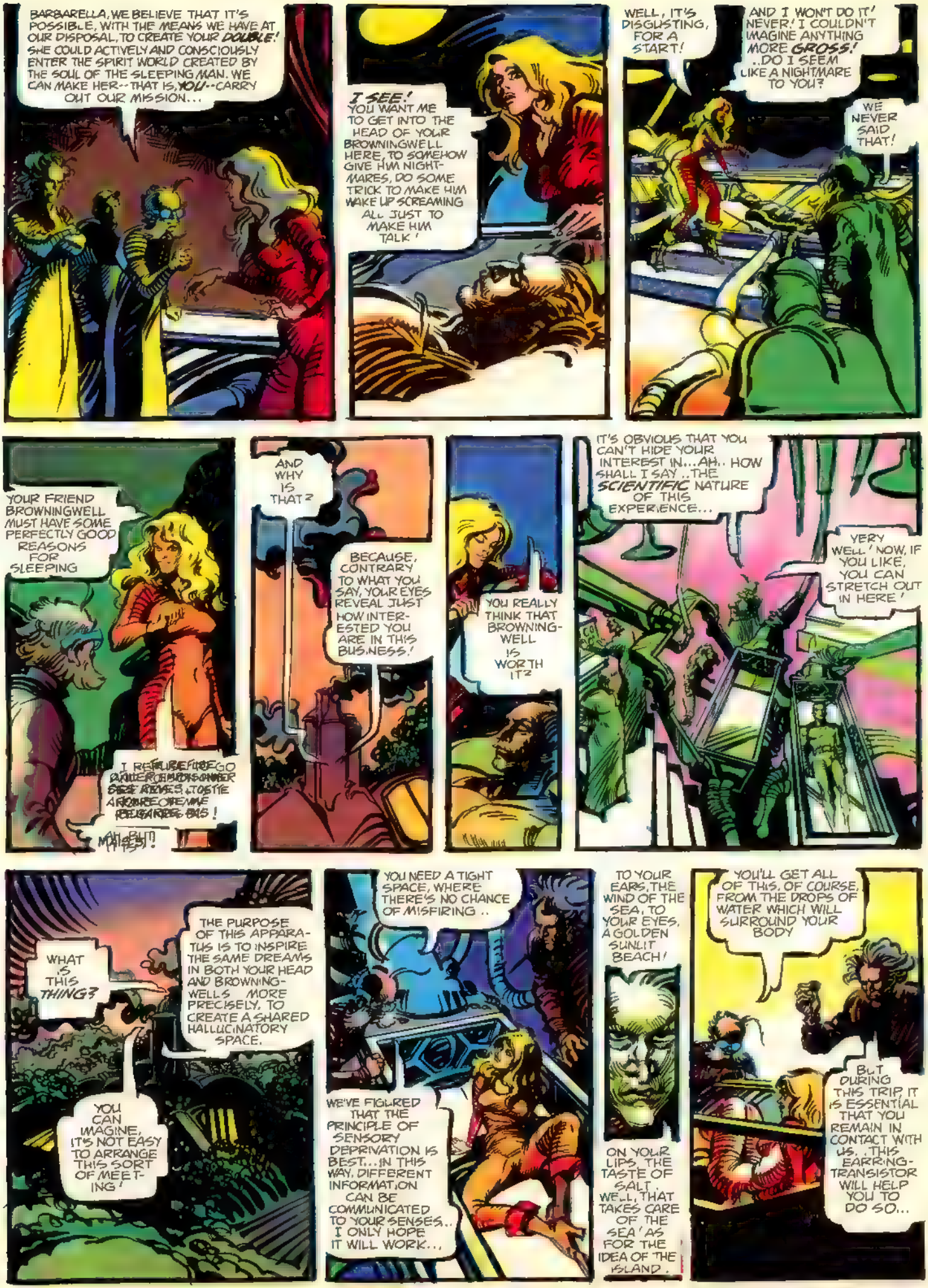

NOW YOU TAKE YOUR AVERAGE SOLAR SYSTEM...
...OURS, FOR EXAMPLE...
AND PICK A PLANET...ANY PLANET...LET'S SAY, THE EARTH!
NOW, LET'S SUPPOSE ALL THIS HAPPENS... HMM...TODAY? NO...THAT'S TOO EASY...LET'S ADD ON A COUPLE OF YEARS... LIKE A THOUSAND, MAYBE. ALL RIGHT THEN! HERE WE ARE IN 2978...
BARBARELLA IN THE MOON CHILD!
NOW, LET'S GET SOMEONE TO REPRESENT THE HUMAN RACE— A WOMAN, FOR EXAMPLE, SINCE WOMEN ARE IN FASHION...AND WE HAVEN'T GOT ANYTHING AGAINST FASHION...
THIS WOMAN IS VERY PRETTY...ALRIGHT, LET'S EVEN ADMIT SHE'S INTELLIGENT AND LIKABLE...LET'S GIVE HER A NAME...A NAME THAT'S NEW AND EXCITING, BUT STILL SOUNDS SORT OF FAMILIAR...
HOW ABOUT: BARBARELLA? YOU KNOW THAT ONE ALREADY? FINE!... THE OLDIES ARE STILL THE GOODIES!... AND ANYWAY, IT'S TOO LATE TO CHANGE IT NOW!
BECAUSE OUR STORY HAS ALREADY BEGUN...THE STORY, THAT IS, OF THE RECENT ADVENTURES OF BARBARELLA... AND IT'S SOME STORY!...

OPEN THE VAULT OF TIME AND SPACE-- WHAT'S INSIDE? A LOVELY FACE, GORGEOUS FIGURE, LONG BLOND HAIR, LEGS FROM HERE CLEAR UP TO THERE...
SILLY-CLEVER, DIRTY-CLEAN, KARMIC COMIC COSMIC QUEEN, GODDESS AND COMEDIENNE-- BARBARELLA'S BACK AGAIN!
TO SAVE TIME, I MIGHT AS WELL TELL YOU RIGHT AWAY THAT THIS WOMAN HERE IS BARBARELLA...YES, YES, IT'S SHE! AND I'LL ADD THAT WHILE SHE SLEEPS AN ARTIFICIAL SLEEP, AND DREAMS VERY NATURAL DREAMS... AHA! LOOKS LIKE SHE'S WAKING UP!
WHERE AM I?
RIGHT HERE! BUT I CANNOT ASSURE YOU OF ANYTHING, MISSY... YOUR DREAMS SEEM TO HAVE INVADED THE LABORATORY AND HAVE CARRIED US ALL AWAY, ALONG STEEP, MYSTERIOUS, AND RARELY TRAVELED ROADS!
I HAVE A FEELING I'VE BEEN DREAMING
THAT'S NOT JUST A FEELING! YOU HAVE BEEN SLEEPING A VERY TROUBLED SLEEP, AND IF YOU TRY TO WAKE UP COMPLETELY, THESE PHANTOMS FLOATING AROUND HERE IN THE LAB MIGHT JUST DISAPPEAR!
IT'S TRUE.. WE'RE STUCK HERE FOR NOW!... THIS TYPE OF EXPERIENCE IS CERTAINLY MOST UNNERVING!
DO SHUT UP, DOCTOR FUORI! HELP ME OPEN THE WINDOWS...WHAT WE NEED IS A REALLY STRONG DRAFT!
CAREFUL! THERE'S SOMEONE BEHIND YOU!
WAS I MAKING YOU HAVE A NIGHTMARE?
UHH NO, THAT IS, YES, I MEAN. JUST IMAGINE SUCH IMPUDENCE!
PARDON ME... NEXT TIME I'LL SHOW MORE SELF CONTROL..
THE NEXT TIME, IT'S WE WHO WILL CONTROL YOU... BECAUSE YOU WILL BE ON ACTIVE DUTY!
YOU MEAN THAT DESPITE OF ALL YOU'VE SEEN.. I MIGHT STILL BE ABLE TO FOLLOW YOUR ORDERS?
EXACTLY! THE RESULTS ARE POSITIVE...YES, PUT TO THE TEST AND PROVEN POSITIVE.. YOU ARE THE MOST TALENTED OF OUR CANDIDATES..
ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! BUT I WANT TO KNOW THE DETAILS WHERE AND WITH WHOM?
FOLLOW ME!
2


THIS MAN IS A COSMONAUT... A FAMOUS ONE.
HE MIGHT JUST BE THE GREATEST EXPLORER OF THE COSMOS ALIVE TODAY.. HIS NAME IS BROWNING-WELL!
HE'S COME FROM FAR AWAY... VERY FAR AWAY... PERHAPS, TOO FAR...
WHICH IS TO SAY IT'S POSSIBLE THAT HE HASN'T QUITE RETURNED YET...
IS THAT WHAT GIVES HIM THE GRUMPY EXPRESSION?
HE'S NOT A BAD LOOKING GUY... IF MY JOB IS TO HELP HIM GET RID OF HIS GRUMPY EXPRESSION, THAT'S JUST FINE — I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT RIGHT AWAY!
NO! DON'T TOUCH HIM! WE MUSTN'T INTERFERE IN ANY WAY!
SHE'S OBSESSED! OBSESSED!
LET ME EXPLAIN...
HOW CAN WE POSSIBLY BUILD A NEW WORLD IN THIS ATMOSPHERE OF LUST AND BODILY SECRETIONS?
I'LL MAKE IT SHORT: FIVE YEARS AGO, BROWNING-WELL SET OFF ON AN EXPEDITION TO THE LIMITS OF THE KNOWN UNIVERSE... HE WAS FOUND LAST YEAR.. ALONE ON BOARD HIS SPACESHIP, ORBITING AROUND SATURN LIKE SOME OLD ASTEROID... AND HE WAS SLEEPING!
COULDN'T ANYTHING WAKE HIM UP?
NOTHING! YET HE WAS IN PERFECT HEALTH! THE NEUROPSYCHIATRISTS THINK THIS CATALEPTIC STATE IS AN UNCONSCIOUS REFUSAL TO MAKE CONTACT AGAIN WITH THE REAL WORLD AND WITH LANGUAGE
IT'S NOT OUT OF THE QUESTION TO ASSUME THAT BROWNINGWELL MADE SOME INCREDIBLE DISCOVERY IN THE COURSE OF HIS TRAVELS, AND THAT HE DOES NOT WANT TO TELL ANYONE ABOUT IT!
AT LEAST, LET'S HOPE THAT SOME SUPERIOR FORCE HAS NOT RENDERED HIM UNCONSCIOUS TO PREVENT HIM FROM TELLING US SOMETHING!
IN ANY CASE, THIS SITUATION CAN'T GO ON NDEFINITELY...
IF THE GUY DOESN'T WANT TO TELL US THE STORY OF HIS LIFE, THAT'S HIS BUSINESS,!... WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO BE DOING HERE?
YOU HAVE TO UNDERGO ENTRANCE TO HIS DREAMS, MISS, AND AGREE TO DO WHATEVER IS NECESSARY TO MAKE THEM UNBEARABLE..
SO, ACCORDING TO YOU, I AM CAPABLE OF SPLITTING MYSELF IN TWO AND ENTERING THE WORLD OF DREAMS, WHILE REMAINING SOMEHOW HERE IN REALITY!
THAT'S OVER-SIMPLIFYING THINGS A LITTLE!
BUT LET'S SAY THAT'S IT!


BARBARELLA, WE BELIEVE THAT IT'S POSSIBLE, WITH THE MEANS WE HAVE AT OUR DISPOSAL, TO CREATE YOUR DOUBLE! SHE COULD ACTIVELY AND CONSCIOUSLY ENTER THE SPIRIT WORLD CREATED BY THE SOUL OF THE SLEEPING MAN. WE CAN MAKE HER--THAT IS, YOU--CARRY OUT OUR MISSION...
I SEE! YOU WANT ME TO GET INTO THE HEAD OF YOUR BROWNINGWELL HERE, TO SOMEHOW GIVE HIM NIGHTMARES, DO SOME TRICK TO MAKE HIM WAKE UP SCREAMING ALL JUST TO MAKE HIM TALK!
WELL, IT'S DISGUSTING, FOR A START!
AND I WON'T DO IT! NEVER! I COULDN'T IMAGINE ANYTHING MORE GROSS! ..DO I SEEM LIKE A NIGHTMARE TO YOU?
WE NEVER SAID THAT!
YOUR FRIEND BROWNINGWELL MUST HAVE SOME PERFECTLY GOOD REASONS FOR SLEEPING
I REFUSE TO GO FURTHER IN THIS MATTER UNLESS I KNOW THE REASONS BEHIND THIS!
AH! BUT I MUST!
AND WHY IS THAT?
BECAUSE, CONTRARY TO WHAT YOU SAY, YOUR EYES REVEAL JUST HOW INTERESTED YOU ARE IN THIS BUSINESS!
YOU REALLY THINK THAT BROWNINGWELL IS WORTH IT?
IT'S OBVIOUS THAT YOU CAN'T HIDE YOUR INTEREST IN... AH.. HOW SHALL I SAY .. THE SCIENTIFIC NATURE OF THIS EXPERIENCE...
VERY WELL! NOW, IF YOU LIKE, YOU CAN STRETCH OUT IN HERE!
WHAT IS THIS THING?
THE PURPOSE OF THIS APPARATUS IS TO INSPIRE THE SAME DREAMS IN BOTH YOUR HEAD AND BROWNINGWELL'S MORE PRECISELY, TO CREATE A SHARED HALLUCINATORY SPACE.
YOU CAN IMAGINE, IT'S NOT EASY TO ARRANGE THIS SORT OF MEETING!
YOU NEED A TIGHT SPACE, WHERE THERE'S NO CHANCE OF MISFIRING ..
WE'VE FIGURED THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF SENSORY DEPRIVATION IS BEST... IN THIS WAY, DIFFERENT INFORMATION CAN BE COMMUNICATED TO YOUR SENSES.. I ONLY HOPE IT WILL WORK...
TO YOUR EARS, THE WIND OF THE SEA, TO YOUR EYES, A GOLDEN SUNLIT BEACH!
ON YOUR LIPS THE TASTE OF SALT. WELL, THAT TAKES CARE OF THE SEA! AS FOR THE IDEA OF THE ISLAND.
YOU'LL GET ALL OF THIS, OF COURSE, FROM THE DROPS OF WATER WHICH WILL SURROUND YOUR BODY
BUT DURING THIS TRIP, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT YOU REMAIN IN CONTACT WITH US.. THIS EARRING-TRANSISTOR WILL HELP YOU TO DO SO...

IF I REALLY DO HAVE TO TAKE A BATH, I'D SURE RATHER DO IT SOMEWHERE ELSE THAN HERE!
GOOD! BUT I ADVISE YOU TO STAY WITHIN REACH. ON THE OTHER HAND, TIME IS CERTAINLY.. UHH ..WELL LESS THAN CERTAIN!
DOCTOR FUORI, YOUR JOB IS TO TURN ON THE TAPS!
WE NOW PROCEED TO THE SLUMBERING STAGE...
BLOODY MARVELOUS! SHE'S FROZEN!
IT'S THE AVERAGE TEMPERATURE OF THE OCEAN.. OBVIOUSLY OUR CALCULATIONS INCLUDE THE ARCTIC AND ANTARCTIC!
GIVE ME YOUR ARM, MISS!
SO, I'M GOING TO FALL ASLEEP AND LAND ON AN ISLAND AND BE ALONE WITH BROWNINGWELL?
LET'S HOPE SO...
THE ROAD TO SOMEONE ELSE'S DREAMS AIN'T HALF AS EASY AS IT SEEMS-- AN ANGEL MIGHT JUST FEAR TO TREAD AROUND IN SOMEONE'S SLEEPING HEAD-- WHETHER YOU THINK SHE'S SMART OR NUTS, YOU MUST ADMIT, THIS DAME'S GOT GUTS!
THAT'S IT.. I DON'T KNOW IF SHE'S ARRIVED YET, BUT I DO KNOW SHE'S LEFT...
THE TV CONTROLS TELL US NOTHING...THE SCREEN IS BLANK...ARE YOU SURE THAT...THAT SHE'S ARRIVED WHERE SHE WAS MEANT TO...
BARBARELLA, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
YEAH!
WHY DO YOU SAY YEAH? WHAT KIND OF TONE IS THAT?
SOMETHING'S NOT WORKING OUT?
OBVIOUSLY IN THE WORLD OF DREAMS, BIRDS CAN SWIM AND FISH CAN FLY...
DON'T YOU THINK THINGS SHOULD BE IN THEIR PLACES?...I MEAN, A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING, AND..
UNFORTUNATELY, A DREAM IS A DREAM... IT HAS TO BE ARRANGED LIKE THAT...IGNORE THESE LITTLE DETAILS...STAY CALM AND TELL US EVERYTHING!

WE HAVEN'T ANY TIME TO WASTE.. CAN YOU SEE BROWNINGWELL ANYWHERE?
I CAN SEE SOME PRETTY STRANGE THINGS, BUT NO BROWNINGWELL... I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THAT HE ISN'T ON THIS ISLAND... OR THAT THIS IS PART OF AN ARCHIPELAGO... IN OTHER WORDS, I THINK YOU GUYS MISSED THE TARGET!
AND THIS REPULSIVE LITTLE RADIO-EARRING IS GIVING ME A ROYAL PAIN!... WOULD IT HAVE BEEN TOO MUCH TROUBLE FOR YOU TO GIVE ME A NECKLACE OR A BRACELET?
BZZZ!
AH!
I'VE FOUND YOUR PAL! OR, AT LEAST, I GUESS IT'S HIM..
IF THESE FEET BELONG TO SOMEBODY AND THAT SOMEBODY IS BROWNINGWELL, HE'S CERTAINLY AMPLY ENDOWED..
THERE'S NO NEED TO GET VULGAR!.. TELL US EXACTLY WHAT YOU SEE, WITHOUT ANY WISECRACKS!
O.K.! I SEE SOMETHING ELSE... A HUGE HEAD ON THE TOP OF THAT HILL!
IS IT BROWNINGWELL'S HEAD?
BARBARELLA SAYS SHE SEES BROWNINGWELL'S HEAD EMERGING FROM A HILL... AND JUST A MINUTE AGO IT WAS HIS FEET COMING OUT OF A CLIFF!
YES, YES.. THE ASTRONAUT WHO IS SLEEPING HERE SO PEACEFULLY IS IN PIECES SOME WHERE ELSE, DISPERSED THROUGH THE LANDSCAPE OF HIS DREAMS, IF YOU SEE WHAT I MEAN!
A BREAKDOWN OF THE PERSONALITY!
EXACTLY. BROWNINGWELL IS USING HIS SCHIZOPHRENIC TENDENCIES TO PLAY GAMES WITH OUR CURIOSITY...
HE HAS DISMANTLED HIS PERSONALITY IN ORDER TO DISCOURAGE QUESTIONS AND PROTECT HIS SECRET
OBVIOUSLY, ONE DOESN'T ASK QUESTIONS OF A FOOT OR A SEVERED HEAD.. MOST TRAVELERS WOULD HURRY ON BY WITH THEIR FINGERS CROSSED.
HEY, WOULD YOU MIND TURNING DOWN THE RADIO?... IT'S AFTER SIX O'CLOCK AT NIGHT!

BARBARELLA, THE SUCCESS OF THIS EXPEDITION DEPENDS ON YOU... THE INTEGRATED BROWNINGWELL EXISTS SOMEWHERE, HIDDEN WITHIN HIMSELF... ONE OF THE PARTS CONTAINS THE WHOLE! EVEN THE MADDEST MAN IS CAPABLE OF LUCIDITY... AS THE PIT OF A ROTTEN FRUIT CAN STILL BEAR FRUIT!
I DON'T SEE ANY SIGN OF A FRUIT!
THERE'S NOT A SIGN OF ANY-THING ON THE HORIZON.. BUT I DON'T SEE HOW ANYONE COULD HIDE HIMSELF HERE .TOO MANY DRAFTS
WAIT... I DO SEE SOME-THING ELSE... A LIGHT-HOUSE...
LOOK, JUST WHEN EVERYTHING'S GOING BADLY FOR A GUY... HIS LAST HOPE IT'S..
I'M ALWAYS GETTING INVOLVED IN THESE IMPOSSIBLE SITUATIONS!... WHY ME, GOD, WHY ME? AND AS FOR BROWNINGWELL, IF HE'S HIDDEN HIM-SELF AWAY ON PURPOSE, HE'S REALLY A FINK! SURELY, HE CAN SEE THAT I'M DYING OF COLD OUT HERE AND WOULD RATHER BE ANYWHERE ELSE...
BROWNINGWELL, CAN YOU HEAR ME? BROWNINGWELL, WHERE ARE YOU?
JUST WHERE ARE YOU, BROWNINGWELL? HOW FAR ARE YOU, BROWNINGWELL? WHERE'VE YOU FLED, BROWNINGWELL? INTO YOUR HEAD, BROWNINGWELL?
INTO YOUR HEART, BROWNINGWELL? IS THAT SMART, BROWNINGWELL? WHERE ARE, , WHAT THE HELL?
BEWARE OF F RST IMPRESSIONS... THEYRE OFTEN ABSOLUTELY RIGHT! THAT LIGHTHOUSE ISN'T THERE FOR NOTHING...
THE REAL QUESTION IS AM I HERE ALONE, OR IS BROWNING-WELL HERE, TOO, FOR SOME REASON?
BROWNINGWELL, STOP THESE ROTTEN TRICKS!.. COME OUT OF THERE!..
THE CREEP WON'T ANSWER... DOES HE WANT ME TO GO FISHING AROUND IN THE WATER?
BROWNINGWELL! THIS WATER'S COLD!
OH, GREAT.. NOW SHE'S CALLING HIM, AS IF THERE WERE THE SLIGHTEST CHANCE HE'D ANSWER!..
UNFORTUNATELY, BUGGER-BUSS, THIS BARBARELLA OF YOURS MAY HAVE AN INCREDIBLE REPUTATION FOR ONE THING, BUT IN EVERY OTHER WAY, SHE'S A DEAD LOSS!
STILL NOT A THING!.. THIS DREAM SURE ISN'T ANY FUN... I HATE BEING TREATED WITH CONTEMPT!

NOTHING! YET, LOGICALLY, BROWNGWELL MUST BE HIDDEN IN THIS LIGHTHOUSE!
AND JUST AS LOGICALLY, I'LL BET MY BOOTIES HE'S PEERING AT ME THROUGH THE KEYHOLE RIGHT NOW!
BUT I'D BETTER NOT CONFUSE REALITY WITH MY FANTASIES...
AH! THAT'S ONE GOOD THING, ANYWAY; THE SUN! IT'S AS IF THE CLOUDS WERE DISAPPEARING BY MAGIC... I CAN TAKE MY CLOTHES OFF AND LEAVE THEM TO DRY..
OKAY, LADY! YOU WIN! NOW HURRY UP AND COME IN... I REALLY DO HATE DRAFTS!
YOU SEEM TO HAVE THE ABILITY TO UNLEASH STORMS, AND I DON'T LIKE THAT. BUT SINCE YOU'RE ALREADY HERE, COME IN AND TELL ME WHAT'S BROUGHT YOU.
WHY, CONCERN, SIR. EVERYONE IS WORRIED ABOUT YOU..
I KNOW THIS "CONCERN" FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH!.. YOU MUST REALIZE I HAVE GOOD REASON TO APPEAR TO BE ASLEEP!
THE CURIOSITY OF DOCTOR BUGGER BUSS AND HIS FRIENDS IS RATHER LESS SCIENTIFIC AND ALTRUISTIC THAN THEY PRETEND!
THEY SUSPECT THAT I'VE HIDDEN THE SECRET OF A UNIVERSAL "EL DORADO" FROM THEM, THAT'S ALL!

MY NAME IS BARBARELLA.
VERY WELL, MISS BARBARELLA. I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT BY STEPPING THROUGH THIS DOOR, YOU HAVE LEFT THE WORLD OF DREAMS. AND IF YOU'RE EMBARRASSED TO BE WALKING AROUND BARE ASSED..
THANKS!
NOW, I'D LIKE TO MAKE ONE THING VERY CLEAR I HAVE WORK TO DO!. THERE'S SOMETHING I MUST ACCOMPLISH... SOMETHING VERY DIFFICULT...
WHAT KIND OF WORK?
IT'S A MASTER-PIECE!
WELL THEN, IS THAT YOUR JOB, MAKING MASTER-PIECES?
YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY UNDERSTAND.. BUT FOLLOW ME AND I'LL TRY TO EXPLAIN THREE THOUSAND YEARS' WORK IN THREE WORDS!
THE MASTERPIECE HAS BEGUN... THERE IT IS... AND AT THE SAME TIME IT IS ELSE-WHERE!...
TO YOU, I AM BROWNING-WELL, ASTRONAUT AND EXPLORER, BUT TO OTHERS I AM THE INDIAN NADIR, FREEDOM FIGHTER, CARPENTER, MEMBER OF THE BROTHERHOOD,.. CHILD OF THE COSMOS, SON OF THE GREAT ENGINEER OF THE UNIVERSE!
WHAT IS THIS PECULIAR MACHINE? DO YOU DO ELECTRICAL WIRING?
I TOLD YOU IT IS A MASTERPIECE... BUT I THINK I MUST TELL YOU A BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR BROTHERHOOD...
..AND PAINT A PICTURE FOR YOU. OF THE SITUATION WHICH FACES THE BROTHERS IN THE WORLD TODAY, IN THIS AGE WHEN MEN EVOLVE FREELY THROUGHOUT THE GALAXY. THE RACE WHICH PEOPLE CALLED "FRENCH" HAS BECOME THE RACE OF THE UNIVERSE, AND MASTERPIECES ARE HENCEFORTH ON A COSMIC SCALE!
MEANWHILE, IN THE LAB IN THE REAL WORLD, BUGGER-BUSS AND HIS FRIENDS CONTINUE TO FOLLOW EVENTS... THANKS TO BARBARELLA'S TWO WAY RADIO-EAR-RING!
SHE HAS SUCCEEDED!
WE HAVE SUCCEEDED
SHUT UP!.. HE'S GOING TO TALK, AT LAST!

BROWNINGWELL IS ABOUT TO CONFIDE IN HER '.. THAT BARBARELLA IS A BITCH, BUT SHE GETS THE JOB DONE, ALRIGHT'
A MINUTE AGO, SHE WAS A DEAD LOSS ACCORDING TO YOU DENTRO!
BUT, IN PARALLEL UNIVERSES, JUST AS IN OUR OWN, CLEVER IS CLEVER AND BROWNING-WELL IS A SUSPICIOUS MAN, .
A SECRET IS A SECRET, BARBARELLA! IF YOU REALLY WANT TO, WE CAN CONTINUE OUR CONVERSATION IN MORE PLEASANT SURROUNDINGS
BZZZT
BZZZZZZ
TAKE THIS JOHN-JOHN AND BE SO KIND AS TO PITCH IT INTO THE SEA, WHICH IS RAGING VERY CONVENIENTLY AT THE MOMENT... AFTER THAT, I WANT TO PROCEED WITHOUT FURTHER ADO TO TAKE-OFF PREPARATIONS
WITH PLEASURE MASTER'
I'M IN A HURRY TO LEAVE THIS ISLAND OF DREAMS AND ITS PRYING SPIES! LET'S LOOK FOR A QUIET SPOT.. THERE MUST CERTAINLY BE PLENTY, IN PARALLEL UNIVERSES!
READY FOR TAKE-OFF!
O.K. DOC'
I MUST SAY, THIS IS A PECULIARLY DECORATED LIGHTHOUSE!
BARBARELLA, I MIGHT AS WELL ADMIT IT THIS LIGHTHOUSE ISN'T A LIGHTHOUSE BUT IT IS A VERY REAL SPACE-SHIP!
A BEAUTIFUL SPACESHIP WITH A VARIABLE GEOMETRY!
BARBARELLA! BARBARELLA! COME IN'
BARBARELLA ISN'T ANSWERING ANYMORE!
MY DEAR SIRS, WE MUST FACE SOMETHING... WE'VE HAD IT!
LISTEN, IT'S NOT REALLY UP TO ME TO SUM UP WHAT'S HAPPENED, BUT IT SEEMS THAT a- YOU'VE CARRIED ME OFF! b- I'VE CONSENTED! c- I'VE BETRAYED MY DUTY AND MY MISSION AND YOU'RE NOT ONE BIT CLOSER TO WAKING UP TO TELL YOUR STORY
SOUNDS ABOUT RIGHT!
BARBARELLA! BARBARELLA! ANSWER IMMEDIATELY!
NEVER MIND, SHE PROBABLY HAS SOMETHING BETTER TO DO'..

...TO BE CONTINUED...

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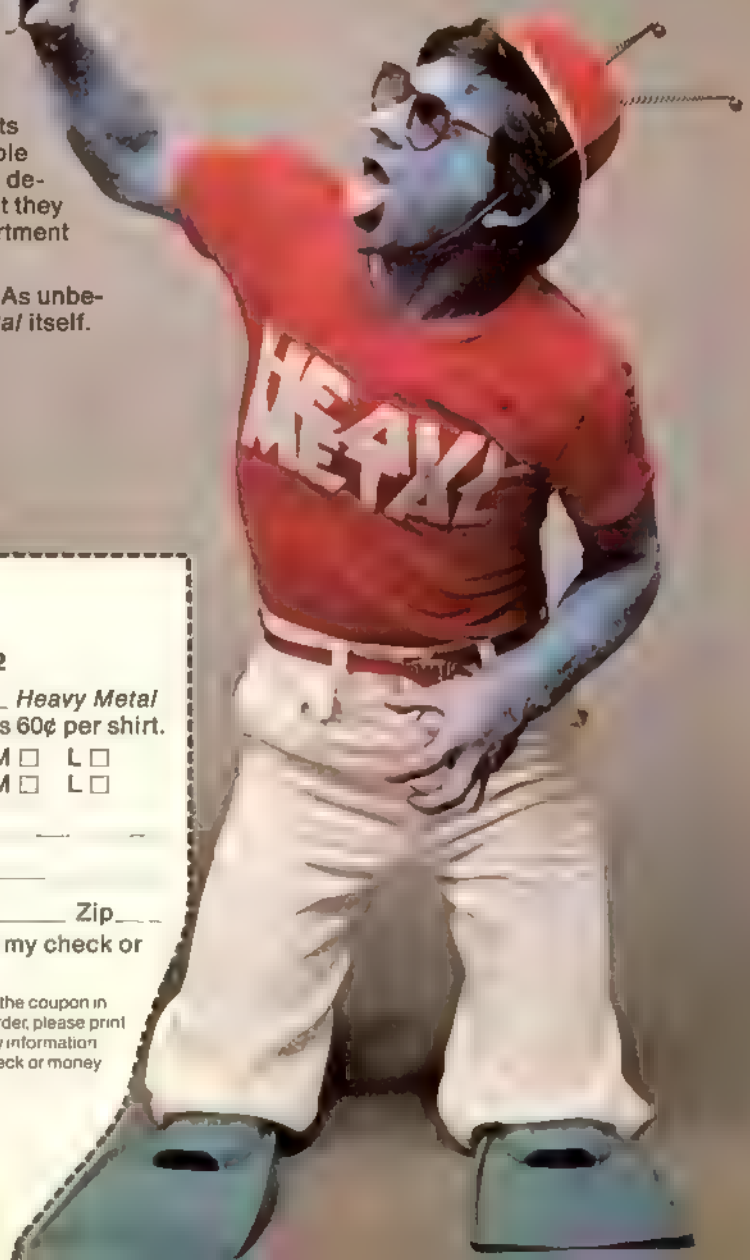

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FOLLO ME, PLEEZ...
I...
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CHEEZ! THISID GO GUD INA PLAZDIK GARDEN!
SCREAMING PEOPLE FLY SO FAST...
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